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CURRENT COMMENT.

So now it is over, and this paper extends its felicitations to the successful candidate, who, from appearances as we go to press, seems likely to be Brother Harding. A just respect for republican institutions impelled us to sit up for the late returns, but after trying it awhile, we felt a sudden drowsiness stealing over us which could not be shaken off, and we finally succumbed into the arms of Porpus. After all, when one knows that a ship is on a set course, one can not be very enthusiastic about staying awake half the night merely to see a couple of wheelmen change watch.

Of course the new Administration will be, like its predecessor, as imperialistic, oppressive and privilege-serving as it dare be. Unfortunately for itself and for those who control it, its opportunities will not be as great as those that opened before the entranced vision of Mr. Wilson's second Administration. Still, they will be quite worth while, if properly managed. We think it highly probable that, to start with, a good many inexpensive sops of one sort and another will be passed out to the people. We look for a repeal of most of the war-legislation affecting personal liberty, the release of political prisoners, abatement of raids and snooping, and relaxation of passport-regulations. All this, if done impressively, would have a good effect and prepossess the public. The new Administration may see its way to get along without making any strong play in behalf of civil rights, however; and if it can do so, of course it will. The only developments that can be predicted with certainty are a return to a high protective tariff and an industrious extension of the system of financial imperialism.

THEN the "association" with foreign nations, forecasted with due and proper vagueness by Mr. Harding, can be brought about; namely, an association of Governments for the purpose of maintaining headway against the spread of those newer ideas and newer movements which tend to weaken the system of imperialism and exploitation. It is a pretty safe bet that in no essential respect will this association differ noticeably from Mr. Wilson's association. It will be much more ably contrived and better managed; but its purpose will be the same. In a word, the general outlook is such that those who are not particularly concerned with the maintenance of the existing

economic system will find as little to interest them in the public affairs of this country during the Republican years ahead as they have found during the Democratic era which is just closing.

M. LEON BOURGEOIS came forward at the last moment and tilted his oil-can over the troubled waters of our presidential campaign. How these politicians do remind one of Trilby in their everlasting readiness to be accommodating! After voiding all our store of windiness over the League of Nations, it now turns out, according to M. Bourgeois, that Article X is no great matter, and that all the practical desiderata are competently taken care of elsewhere in the covenant. That has been the view of this paper all along, and hence we have consistently declined to fool away any space to speak of, over Article X. We are glad to have our judgment backed up by the Eminent Grand Sachem of the League-as-is. We are also encouraged to hope that some other logical Frenchman will soon speak up and verify the rest of our estimate of the League; which, in brief, is that it is a device for maintaining the existing system of economic exploitation, without the risk and cost of war. This view may seem fanciful enough to-day; but in a couple of years or thereabouts, we shall venture to remind our readers of it, whether we win or lose.

SEARCH as we will, we can not find it in our minds and hearts to urge upon President Wilson the preponderant need for consistency of plan and purpose in all his earnest efforts to establish and maintain the peace of the world and the welfare of mankind. If only the President would prune the rose-bushes of his rhetoric, the people might find this service of more practical value than any amount of mere consistency. It is our intention, then, to make a little joke at the expense of the Administration, rather than to censor Mr. Wilson and his Government for the lack of a virtue which is sadly short in everybody, ourselves, perhaps, most of all. We are thinking now of that painful affair of the "spokesmen of France," who brought Senator Harding such cheering news from Europe; of the Russian adventures of one W. D. Vanderlip, who is, or is not, the Senator's representative in Moscow; and of the threatening utterances in Mexico City of a certain Mr. William Buckley, who speaks prophetically of all that will happen when Messrs. Harding, Fall, Lodge, and Knox come to power, and "is regarded by Mexicans as the spokesman of leading Republicans in the United States." The first of these matters was the occasion of a tiff between ex-President Wilson and next-President Harding, the second called forth a gentle remonstrance from Mr. Colby, while the third has thus far escaped the attention of our otherwise alert Government.

TRUE or not, these reports of extra-diplomatic activity are interesting, and it is pleasant to think that they may give evidence of a wise forehandedness on the part of Senator Harding in the creation of a Department of Foreign Affairs. The righteous anger of the Administration over these real or supposed diplomatic irregularities seems a little inappropriate, too, when one remembers that no foreign Government which desires to deal directly with Mr. Harding, or with any other person or persons in America, need do more than follow the precedent set by Mr. Wilson himself when he came near to wrecking the Italian Government in 1919 by "going

to the people" of Italy in the matter of Fiume. This issue in itself was hardly worth all the fuss made over it; but for a while it did look as though the President had made a change for the better as we should consider it, in diplomatic procedure. And now that the proprieties of international discourse are restored to their old respectability, we can serve Mr. Wilson no better than by calling attention to the fact that there was a time when he himself was less honourably mindful than now of the international obligation to do nothing frankly and openly.

"THE banking-power of our country at this time," says Mr. John Skelton Williams, Comptroller of the Currency, "is three times as great as the total banking-power of the entire world in 1890, as estimated by Mulhall at \$15,585,000,000. The banking-power of the United States, according to Mulhall's estimate in 1890, was only \$5,150,000,000. Our banking-power is, therefore, to-day about nine times what it was just thirty years ago." This is very interesting, but Mr. Williams would render a great service if he would inform us where and how these banking-resources are being used. This is a question which the farmers are asking; it is a question which the would-be home-owners are asking; it is a question which business men all over the country are asking. What is being done with this \$53,000,000,000 of banking-assets? How is it being used? And why is it that interest-rates are rising when they should be falling, and the producing classes of the country are clamouring for credit just to keep industry alive, and are being met with the statement that there is not enough credit to go around? This paper knows several worthy citizens who would be very happy to hire a large hall in any city suitable to Mr. Williams's convenience if he would be so kind as to answer these questions; and we can promise him a very attentive and thoughtful audience.

WHEN the final and complete Report of the U. S. Census is published we hope that it will quickly enter the class of best-sellers. There is obviously going to be plenty of wholesome reading in its pages. Thus the figures have just been published, showing the decline in our rural population, which contain rich food for thought and discussion during the long, winter evenings that are ahead of us. This exodus from the farm which the Census has revealed in all its formidable proportions, our statesmen are wont to ascribe to the movies, the attractions of urban life, the lure of high wages and to a score of other equally plausible superficialities. And these same statesmen attempt to check this drift by providing the farmers with free seeds and by moral exhortations. But the trouble is that the average farmer can not make a living. This is not because he does not produce enough. As a matter of fact, the annual farm-wealth of this country is in excess of \$24,000,000,000, or about \$4,000 per farm. But the average farmer does not get anything like this return for his labour. Professor Asinby Hobbs, stated recently in the *New York Times*, that the average American farmer clears only \$9.61 a week—which is about one-half what he is now paying for his hired man!

OF course the farmer himself is largely to blame for his present lamentable condition. He has allowed himself to become the Cinderella of politics. He has never taken the trouble to send more than two or three representatives to Congress, and very few to the State Assemblies. As a nation, we are ruled by a soviet of lawyers, bankers, and agents of "big business." These men are interested in the farmer chiefly as a producer of the wealth in which they speculate. The American farmer is embargoed all the time by all the monopolists, especially by the railroads and the banks, which latter institutions are controlled by speculative interests, that force the farmer to sell whenever the speculators demand it, and—to add insult to injury—refuse to give him the necessary credit with which to carry his crops.

THERE is no inherent reason why the farmer in this country should not be the most prosperous farmer in the world. Of all countries we have the richest soil, the best markets, and the greatest investment of capital per man. We have every variety of climate and of agricultural products. And yet, as the Census figures show beyond dispute, our greatest American industry is dying. Only radical treatment can save it. What is needed is a surgical operation to get rid of the speculative middle-men who prey upon the farmer. To bring this about, the farmer himself must work through co-operative agencies such as have been developed so successfully in Denmark and on the continent of Europe, or he must seek State aid, as the Australian farmer has done. Not until the products of our farms, financed by non-exploiting agencies, move freely and openly to the markets, will the rapid decay in American agriculture be checked, and the farmer be able to compete successfully with the larger wages and profits of the city-worker.

THE prerequisite for American recognition of Mexico is the recognition by Mexico of the right of the United States to limit the sovereign powers of the Mexican Government with respect to American-owned property in the southern Republic. For some little time this has been the most important consideration in every discussion of Mexican-American relations; and now, at last, it appears that the Government of de la Huerta is about to buy recognition at the price that has been set. Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution states that "in the nation is vested direct ownership in minerals . . . such as . . . petroleum"; and that "the ownership of the nation is inalienable." And it is further provided that "the right to acquire ownership in lands, . . . or to obtain concessions to develop mines, waters or mineral fuels" may be granted to foreigners only if they agree "to be considered as Mexicans in respect to such property and accordingly not to invoke the protection of their Governments in respect to the same."

THESE provisions were intended to safeguard the Mexican Government in its prerogative to deal with foreign privilege-holders in Mexico exactly as it dealt with those of its own citizens—to nationalize, or socialize, or confiscate to its heart's content, so long as no discrimination were made against foreigners. What our Government has been asking for is discrimination in favour of foreigners—of our own particular sort—and in compliance with our demands, Señor Pesqueira, the special Mexican emissary at Washington, has stated that the provisions of Article 27 are not to be considered retroactive or confiscatory. In other words, Americans in Mexico are not, hereafter, to be treated as Mexicans with respect to their property-rights, but are to go about carrying their tribal law with them, like the Germanic tribesman in France, in the days of the imperial decline. If recognition is once obtained by Mexico on these terms, American concessions will stand as a permanent obstacle to any new attempt on the part of Mexico to break the control of the natural-resource monopolists—and the United States will continue to pose as the defender of the old system of exploitation, abroad as well as at home.

Now that the Administration seems disposed to accept so warm-heartedly the Mexican offer of surrender, the lesser objections to recognition seem ludicrous in the extreme. It was hardly a week ago that our State Department coupled with the usual discussion of property-rights, a statement that de la Huerta was an objectionable person because he had come to power as a result of a violent revolution. Obregon, on the other hand, had been constitutionally elected—and was about to be inaugurated in like manner—so why not wait for him? If the State Department has a conscience, and if this conscience is comforted by the establishment of a distinction between the violence of de la Huerta and the violence of Obregon, this bit of casuistry will do no real harm, we suppose. Everybody knows that the recent

revolution was more Obregon's doing than de la Huerta's; and the fact that the former gentleman has recently gotten himself whitewashed at the polls can make no difference to anyone except an expert in diplomatic indulgences. Argument on this subject is no more than shadow-boxing anyhow; Venustiano Carranza himself was a good deal of a revolutionist before he became a recognized President; and if Obregon should sack the City of Mexico and strangle de la Huerta in his bed, it would all be soon forgotten if only the good Señor will give sufficient attention to the other set of requirements for recognition. This, indeed, the Mexican Government seems now ready to do. But though a surrender may bring early recognition, there is always a chance that peace and prosperity will escape a too-eager hand. The Mexicans are a bit sensitive in the matter of American interference. They may not be altogether pleased to see the new Government make concessions which Carranza refused to make. And when the Mexicans are displeased, they have their own characteristic way of making their feelings known.

AN extraordinary change seems to have come over the minds of the political leaders of France during the past two or three years. They seem to have lost their old keenness for realities and their political sagacity is showing itself constantly at fault. A recent dispatch of Mr. Walter Duranty, the *New York Times* correspondent at Paris, is to the point in this connexion. Referring to the rumoured disintegration of Soviet Russia, Mr. Duranty says: "The extent to which the French public is being influenced in one direction is marked by the fact that not a single newspaper here refers to the recent truce between the Ukrainian Nationalist Army and Bolshevik forces and only the Socialist *Humanité* to its first consequence, the heavy defeat of Wrangel in the region of Nikopol—where the Reds claim 11,000 prisoners—and perhaps the even more dangerous Red drive against his extreme left flank in the region of Kherson, where the Reds claim to have crossed the Dneiper and captured the town of Alocki and villages to the south and northeast. What is the purpose of this campaign of misinformation, exaggeration and concealment? Perhaps in most cases it is simply the wish of the French to see the Bolsheviks overthrown that is father to the thought that every anti-Bolshevik rumour sent out from Helsingfors or Warsaw is true. Judging from past events, however, it would seem that there is something more behind." With commendable perspicacity Mr. Duranty adds, "It is quite possible that French opinion is being carefully prepared for definite intervention against Soviet Russia." True enough, Mr. Duranty, and since the American people know very little more of the truth about Russia than do the French "it is quite possible that American opinion is being carefully prepared," etc. Of course we shall not depart so far from normalcy as to send "our boys" overseas, but our money and munitions will always be at the disposal of the countrymen of Lafayette. Meanwhile our business men will be sending their emissaries to Moscow seeking markets and concessions! What a setting is here for some latter day Gilbert and Sullivan!

IF Mr. Lloyd George ever has time to turn his wireless telephone-receiver in the direction of South Africa, he must be considerably disturbed by the S. O. S.'s which General Smuts has been sending out of late. From all accounts, South Africa in these days is about as restful a place to live in as Ireland, and the cause of all the trouble is that same *post-bellum* passion for self-determination. The yoke of the British Empire seems to hang as heavy on some South Africans as it does on some Irishmen. From Cape Town to Pretoria, public opinion is now sharply divided into two groups—Nationalists and Unionists—and the temper of the Nationalists is intransigent enough to satisfy the most thorough-going Sinn Feiner. A recent conference of the Nationalist party proclaimed, in approved Dublin style, the sovereign will of the people of South Africa, their right

to self-determination, and that active propaganda for secession from the British Empire must form an integral part of the programme of the party. To meet this formidable and growing movement for secession, General Smuts has been working hard for a union of loyalists and has at last succeeded in uniting the South African party which is composed of Boers who believe in the Union and the English-speaking Unionist party which is strongest in Natal. Opposed to General Smuts is General Hertzog, the Nationalist leader and the battle between their two forces is now joined. Meanwhile the attitude of the growing Labour party towards both Generals is one of malevolent neutrality. And over all loom the disinherited native peoples—perhaps they see in this quarrel an opportunity by which some day they may return into their own.

THE worst possible news is coming through from Austria these days. The food-situation is reported to be "worse than last year," when it was bad enough in all conscience. And now the American Relief Association has lately extended its charities to include clothing, because "thousands of families had insufficient garments to permit more than one child at a time to go to the kitchens of the fund for food." The elder statesmen at Versailles would no doubt agree that this is all very unfortunate, but they would argue that the Allied and Associated Powers dare not run the risk of a Teutonic revival—or survival, more appropriately—by allowing Austria to unite with Germany, which is the only hopeful and practical course open to her. Meanwhile, the dying of Austria may be prolonged awhile by Allied charity. But the worst of all this statesmanship is that it is so hard on the children, who after all have done nothing to deserve it.

PEACE hath her atrocities no less renowned than war, and news of them comes thick and fast upon us every day from Ireland, India, Haiti, Korea and other parts of the habitable globe. It behooves us therefore, to get out of the supremely silly habit of nationalizing these atrocities. The murder of the Lord Mayor of Cork and the reprisals upon his suffering fellow-citizens are not British atrocities, and if we hold the British people responsible for them, we are not just. Put the shoe on our own foot: how much did we, the American people, have to do with the atrocities committed in Haiti? Precious few of us knew they were going on, or even would have known, except for the accident of a presidential campaign; and most of us who know are so ignorant of the nature of political government that we think we have really vindicated ourselves and done ourselves proud when we send Mr. Josephus Daniels packing. The British people are in precisely our case with reference to Ireland. They are as diligently tricked, misled, stupefied and bamboozled as we are, by precisely the same sort of people and for precisely the same ends. Let us, by all means, be as indignant as ever we will over these outrages in and upon Ireland; but let us not bring our indictment against a whole people. Our indictment should lie against the system of imperialism and exploitation which exercises itself through political government, and this system, so far from being British, American, French or German, or distinguishable by any nationality, is as purely international as smallpox or typhus and as easy to eradicate, when once its nature is clearly understood.

The editors can not be responsible for manuscripts submitted, but if return postage be enclosed, they will do all in their power to see that rejected manuscripts are returned promptly.
It is not to be understood that articles signed with a name, pseudonym, or initials necessarily agree with the opinion of the editors, either as to substance or style. They are printed because, in the editors' judgment, they are intrinsically worth reading.

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TOPICS OF THE DAY.

F FARMS OR REAL ESTATE?

THE farmers of America are said to be facing a shrinkage of \$2,500,000,000 in the value of their fall harvest and now their cry is going up to high heaven for more governmental control. It is somewhat strange that men who are thus facing ruin after so much governmental interference should be asking for more instead of less of it, and this in a year when our soil is yielding a record crop, and when the country should be enjoying the benefits that were to flow from the Federal Reserve Board—the benefits of cheap money for farmers, low rates of interest for cotton-growers, no more financial panics.

The truth of the matter is that our farmers are the ignorant victims of a corrupt and vicious system, and at last they are waking up to the facts. Perhaps they will be able to learn something from our city newspapers. The New York *Times*, of course, is always ready to help the good work forward with such words of wisdom as these: "Farmers are merchants as well as producers, and, if they had wished, they could have sold their crops before they were harvested and saved their loss. They are nearest the soil, and had first intelligence of what others did not learn until the last report of the Agricultural Department putting the production of grain at 5,680,000,000 bushels." Farmers everywhere will appreciate to the full the editor's cheery indifference to the car-shortage and they will feel ashamed of themselves when they realize that they have disappointed the people in Times Square by not being able to tell, while the seeds were still germinating in the ground, what their harvest would amount to in so many bushels. But of course a good many farmers read other portions of their newspapers than those hortatory editorials addressed to themselves and they see that oodles of good government-money is always outpouring, as from an inexhaustible cornucopia, for the railways; for Cuban sugar-growers; and for any and every organized commercial interest that is based on privilege.

At first sight there may seem to be little connexion between the Palace of Versailles and a farm in Iowa, but it is true to say that the position of the American farmer would have been vastly different to-day if there had been a few men at the Paris conference wise enough to insist upon a peace compatible with reason and justice. What a market for the products of our farms starving Europe would have been if the blockade had been removed at the time of the armistice, and the whole continent from the Urals westward to the sea had been permitted to import and export freely. But the farmer knows better than anyone that it is no use crying over spilt milk. The time has come for him to do a little deep delving into the economic system under which he lives and to strive to understand the disease that poisons the soil. A fundamental law of production is being perpetually violated in this country and it ought not to be difficult for the farmer—or anybody else for that matter, even the politician—to see where the trouble is. The fact that is most frequently overlooked, of course, is that production does not begin and end with the products of labour. It has its inception in land, in natural resources; and not until that simple truth is realized, that land is the primary factor in production, shall we have any understanding of the fluctuations of industry, merchandizing and banking.

The abnormal demand for commodities during recent years has sent the value of land soaring up to

giddy heights. This rise in land-values in our cities is of course evident to everybody. But in the rural areas too, the rise in land-value has affected the primary industries. The situation was clearly revealed in an article in the New York *Evening Post* of 16 October. The writer put the case in a nut-shell thus:

. . . . Is the farmer justified in demanding higher prices for his products merely because his land is worth more on the market? Should he boost the price of his real estate, and then seek a price level for his products that will pay interest on the new valuation? At bottom this new plane of land-value is the basis of much of the demand for higher prices for food stuffs, interest in the estimated investment always entering into the computation of the just value of a bushel of wheat or of corn. The farmer holds that he should make his computation on this basis and through his various organizations is asking for three dollar wheat, claiming that this is a minimum figure at which he can afford to raise it on his high-priced land.

Here lies the root of the matter; high prices for commodities and high prices for the land from which the commodities are produced. But there must, of course, be a limit to high prices; and when that limit is reached, trade depression begins, unemployment follows, and then bread-lines and bolshevism. These things follow from the rise in land-value as night follows day. It does not take long for rising prices to pass beyond the margin of wages, for fully sixty per cent of our population subsists on wages which have little or no elasticity even in such an exceptional period as the present. And yet when trade depression comes the last item to fall in value is land. To quote from the article in the *Evening Post* again: "The future of land-values has almost ceased to be a subject of discussion—it is generally assumed that prices are to remain high for a long time and perhaps permanently." The writer then proceeds to give several remarkable illustrations of recent increases in land-value:

. . . . Out in central Kansas, two hundred miles west of this city (Kansas City) and nine miles from any town, a half section, 320 acres, was bought for \$16,000, fourteen years ago. It was considered an extravagant price. Three years ago half of it was sold for \$17,700 to settle an estate. Last week the same 160 acres sold for \$35,000—and only \$300 in building improvements has been spent on it since the original purchase. This is a typical instance; land is making the owners rich and the speculators who have had courage to buy within the past three years have also reaped handsome returns.

Another instance of this speculative fever comes from central Iowa where a farmer is reported by the *Evening Post* as saying:

. . . . 'Land around here is selling at \$500 to \$600 an acre—but there is mighty little to sell. It will go higher yet.' The day before, a farmer in western Illinois whose fairly well improved land told of success remarked: 'I bought this 167 acres for \$14,000 ten years ago; I was offered \$325 an acre for it last week. I asked \$350 and I'll get it.'

This mad demand for land at speculative prices has brought in its train a situation which is fraught with disaster. In some sections of the country farm-loan rates have reached as high as seven per cent and yet the Federal Land Bank is compelled to stand idly by while the United States Supreme Court delays its decision regarding the constitutionality of the law creating the Land Bank. The result of this impasse is that in the minds of farmers "the idea of State aid has taken root as one way out of the situation and a decided movement is seen toward the State issuing bonds and loaning their proceeds at a low rate of amortized payments to the farmer."

But the question arises where is all this business of land speculation to end, and what is more to the

point, what is to become of the farmer meantime? His position to-day is humiliating; on the one hand he is looking to the State for cheap loans and on the other to the Federal Government for assistance in marketing his crop at a profitable figure. But he is very near the end of his patience. Secretary Houston with the harshness which is characteristic of members of expiring Administrations tells him "the Treasury has no money to deposit except for Government purposes" and that "individuals and communities must return to a normal degree of self help." The farmer then must choose between agriculture and land-speculation. Either he must settle down in earnest to study the whole science and business of farming or he must take up the real-estate business—and damn the consequences. He can not make a success of both. While he is thinking over the problem, this paper would like to suggest that he should consider the possibility of taking the value of the land for the use of the community and abolish the burden of Federal and State taxes that now falls so heavily upon the farm, and penalizes and restricts every effort of the farmer.

PROPAGANDA AND CENSORSHIP.

AN amiable friend of ours, once connected with the Veblenian *Dial* of other days, used to say that in the course of the war the legislative, executive and judicial branches of the American Government were all rolled together in a lump, and the whole business then re-divided into the two new Departments of Propaganda and Censorship.

From this pleasantry, so fully applicable to European as well as to American conditions, one may draw the inference that battles are never fought for the truth. In all those matters that pertain to the social life of man, our best statement of the truth is a diffident approximation, not fit to go abroad without an *entourage* of qualifications and exceptions. And such an approximation is not calculated to arouse men or nations to the fighting pitch; when one of the parties to the argument has admitted that his data may be incomplete, his reasoning imperfect, and his conclusions not altogether sound, he can seldom find in himself a burning desire to go out and kill another man who holds, with equal uncertainty, an approximate conclusion which differs somewhat from his own.

Once granted that war is necessary in these times—and, mind, we are not arguing that point here—propaganda and censorship are as needful as guns, and the publicity-men who sacrifice our ideas and ideals to the common cause are no more deserving of blame than the generals who sacrifice our men in battle. If the end justifies the latter means, it certainly justifies the former, liberalism to the contrary notwithstanding; and only the sorriest kind of ingratitude can lead America to turn her back now upon those sturdy mobilizers of moral who did so much to help win the war. One can not keep one's moral cake and eat it too, as those persons seem to think who so much object to propaganda and censorship in war-time.

This brings us to the sad case of the Providence *Journal*, and its editor, Mr. John Revelstoke Rathom. In those heroic days when Americans wanted to be fooled, in order that they might kill with an altogether clear conscience, no man among us, in or out of the Government, was so active in exposing the heinousness of the Germans as this same Mr. Rathom. When a dispatch opened with the words "To-morrow the Providence *Journal* will say," readers up and down the country knew what to expect, and it is seldom

enough that they were disappointed. The *Journal* was credited with the discoveries which led to the recall of Von Papen and Boy-Ed, with the uncovering of the plots to corrupt Congress and to restore Huerta in Mexico, with the exposure of Bryan's "peace-at-any-price" interview with Dumba, the conviction of Consul-General Bopp of San Francisco, and goodness knows what other items of successful Sherlocking.

The achievements of the *Journal* gave its editor an international reputation, and finally toward the end of the year 1917, arrangements were made in accordance with which the *World's Work* of New York, *Land and Water* of London, and *Le Matin* of Paris were to publish simultaneously a series of articles in which Mr. Rathom would make known to the Allied world the full enormity of German plotting in America. In December, 1917, the managing editor of *World's Work* heralded Mr. Rathom's articles with words that give some notion of the position the Providence *Journal* held in the country at that time:

To reprint all the original cablegrams, letters, checks, photographs and codes on which . . . [the *Journal's* exposures] are based would fill a five-foot shelf of books. This mass of data, accumulated in three years of ceaseless search, is stored in triplicate vaults in Providence, New York, and Washington. Copies of every item of it have been supplied, as discovered, to the State Department in Washington or to some other branch of the Government. It is literally the foundation-stone upon which has been erected the whole structure of our present enormous secret service, and it is the cause of the awakening of the American people to the hideous menace of Germany's cold-blooded assaults upon our very existence as an independent nation.

The first of the much-advertised articles appeared in the *World's Work* for February, 1918. Then suddenly the series snapped, with no explanation beyond the statement that Mr. Rathom and the *World's Work* had severed connexion by mutual agreement; and the managing editor of the magazine thereupon began a series of articles on the German plots, prepared with the assistance of the Department of Justice.

This affair seemed to work no material damage to Mr. Rathom's reputation, and from that time until a few days ago, he was still the most conspicuous single influence in producing that artificial unanimity of opinion which is necessary in time of war. From the following paragraph which appeared regularly in the *Journal*, and was copied by many other papers, one may judge the use he made of this tremendous influence:

Every German or Austrian in the United States, unless known by years of association to be absolutely loyal, should be treated as a potential spy. Keep your eyes and ears open. Whenever any suspicious act or disloyal word comes to your notice communicate at once with the Bureau of Investigation of the Department of Justice.

However, Mr. Rathom was not satisfied with this amateur snooping, for in his first and only article in the *World's Work*, he lamented the fact that "the United States is now the only nation in the world without any political secret service or espionage system." This defect has since been remedied, and Mr. Rathom, like Pandora, is now himself suffering some of those evils which he was at such pains to set going in this country.

The business of baiting the Germans having gone stale, the editor of the *Journal* has recently turned upon Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt those weapons which he used so effectively against the Kaiser's vice-regents here in the United States. In summary, Mr. Rathom accused the Assistant Secretary of the Navy of a too-great leniency toward men convicted of immorality, and of the criminal suppression of official records.

In search of redress, Mr. Roosevelt asked United States District Attorney Francis G. Caffey if the gentleman from Providence could be indicted for libel in the Federal Courts. Mr. Caffey replied that this could not be done, since the "libellous material" had not been sent through the mails. But just to show what Mr. Rathom's word was worth, the District Attorney issued to the press a "confession" by the Providence editor, which had been on ice in the Department of Justice since February, 1918.

In those war-like days the Department and Mr. Rathom were by no means on the best terms, partly because the public gave the Providence *Journal* credit for a lot of work that should presumably have been done by the Attorney General's forces, and partly because Mr. Rathom was continually reproaching the Department for its cautious regard for legality in its handling of malefactors once discovered. From official statements which accompany the confession now published, we learn that when Mr. Rathom was investigating the Germans, the Department of Justice was investigating him. While this latter bit of research was under way, the Attorney General issued the following instructions to the Chief of the Department's Bureau of Investigations:

John R. Rathom of the Providence *Journal* has, in public speeches and otherwise, made a number of absolutely false statements in regard to his own activities, the activities of the Department of Justice, his own connexion with and revelations to this department and the criminal activities of spies, aliens and other persons and classes of persons.

If he will make in the presence of not less than three reputable witnesses, a complete confession as to these false statements on points which will be brought to his attention by you, . . . I will not, for the present, print the statement or permit it to be printed, nor will I give it out for publication. In case I think the public good demands, I shall, in a confidential way, show it to such individuals as I may select. I reserve the right to publish it at any time in the future when I may conclude that it is for the public good that such course be taken.

The course I may take as to the publication of this confession will depend largely on the conduct of Mr. Rathom in the future.

In accordance with the requirements here set forth, Mr. Rathom confessed in writing that in a number of instances he had made deliberately false statements in regard to the sources of his evidence, and that "the belief that the Providence *Journal* has specifically brought to justice any . . . [German spies and malefactors] creates an unjust impression and does take away from the Department of Justice the full credit to which it is entitled for its work."

Information supplied by the Department of Justice led the *World's Work* to suppress Rathom's later articles, and the publication of the confession itself at that time would undoubtedly have caused a general slackening off of the hate propaganda. But the country was at war, and the people could not on any account be allowed to know what sort of person the high priest of hundred-per-cent-Americanism really was. It was better that the public should go on accepting at full value all that the *Journal* said, as long as the Department of Justice held in the suppressed confession a guarantee of comparative immunity from Mr. Rathom's attacks.

We have already remarked that a war which spares ideals is just as impossible as a war which spares life. The suppression of the Rathom confession for the period of active fighting may, therefore, be defended on the highest grounds of casuistic patriotism. But with the signing of the armistice, this defence collapsed, and it was obviously to the public interest that the process of disillusionment should begin.

Nothing of the sort happened, however, and the use to which the confession has now been put seems to justify the suspicion that it was elicited in the first instance, and has since been used for the sole purpose of forcing Mr. Rathom to smother his criticism of the Government. For the *Journal* has finally dared the worst, and has given Mr. Roosevelt very much the sort of treatment it gave the Germans and the slackers in the good old days. Surely we need not explain that as between Mr. Rathom and Mr. Roosevelt we have no means of judging, and no desire to judge. In the ordinary course of events, their little affair would have had no more importance than the other scandals that are raked up at election-time. But here an attack upon a political candidate, a holder of public office, has been countered by the exposure of material which was gathered by the secret service in war-time, and has no direct bearing on the case.

As a matter of course, we want to know all about the character of Mr. Rathom, and the character of all the other people of his kind who helped to win the war—as the villain of this piece unquestionably did. But we do not like to be set wondering how many more bottled confessions the Department of Justice now holds ready for uncorking, as the exigencies of politics shall demand. In other words, we have no fondness for the idea that the mechanism of secret service, censorship and propaganda which was created for the purpose of enforcing an artificial unanimity of opinion in time of war, may now be used for the utterly indefensible suppression of criticism in time of peace. As between crookedness to win the war and crookedness to protect the Government, we feel obliged to vote for the former—and more especially now, when the need for it is past.

RECESSINAL.

THE sustained and bitter quarrel among the victors over the spoils of victory is revealing quite clearly the fundamental antagonisms among the members of the Entente. Already British statesmen are beginning to concern themselves with new arrangements. The problem that faces them is whether to remain enmeshed in the Continental system or to revert to their former policy of "splendid isolation," to use the late Lord Salisbury's term, if such a policy is practicable in these days. The British Premier put the case tactfully when he said a few weeks ago to a correspondent of a leading American newspaper: "The British Government will not quarrel with the French or attempt to impose its will on the French Government or people. It will simply let them go their own way. If ever Great Britain has relations with Germany independent of France, it will not be from the British angle alone, but from the angle of the League of Nations." This statement sums up the evidence that has been gathering from all quarters during the past few months. Henceforth the two Governments will go their own way; more in sorrow than in anger each seems to be saying of its late partner "let the erring sister go."

The sharp differences in purpose and policy which have arisen so frequently between the two countries since the close of the peace conference have been accentuated by the British renunciation of the right of confiscation of German property. Bitter, indeed, are the comments of the French press at this latest demonstration of British self-determination. Pertinax in the *Echo de Paris* is shocked at what he declares to be the gravest crisis which has disturbed the Entente since the armistice.

Is it then any wonder that the French Government is looking around for a new friend; already the air

of the embassies is thick with rumours of a Franco-American alliance. Such gossip has even attained the dignity of print and the French Foreign Office has felt constrained to notice it with an official denial. But denials of this kind deceive nobody. The methods of governments in sounding public opinion are perfectly well-known; their press-bureaux must always find out how the wind is blowing before any definite statement of government policy is officially announced in their congresses and parliaments. But we in this country may feel ourselves safe from any embarrassing friendships. Mr. Harding's pledge of normalcy will effectually prevent the next Administration from being drawn into any entente with France. The sentimental and unsophisticated may see in a Franco-American entente a method of cementing friendship and promoting good-will and peace among the nations; but they forget that there is another side to such affairs which promotes only international ill-will and war. No better proof of this can be found than in the tragic story of the Franco-British Entente. When Lord Lansdowne as Foreign Secretary in 1904 entered into negotiations with the French Government with a view to healing the breach that then existed between France and England he could never have foreseen that the policy he and King Edward were inaugurating would end in the greatest war in history. Yet no sooner was Britain a party to the Entente than British policy became enmeshed in the nefarious schemes of Messrs. Delcassé and Isvolsky.

The tragic sequence of events during those five years preceding the outbreak of the war has often been told; but it is worth briefly recalling here. Following the consummation of the Entente, France surrendered her interests in Egypt for Britain's support of the Franco-Spanish-Moroccan policy. The secret treaty which accomplished the Anglo-French agreement of 1904 provided for the partition of Morocco by France and Spain with Britain as a benevolent neutral. But this treaty rode rough-shod over the interests of Germany in that region and there soon followed a campaign of retaliation between Germany on the one hand and the Entente on the other. In Africa the German Foreign Office was beaten at every move. To save the waning prestige of the Wilhelmstrasse, an alliance of British and German oil-interests in Mesopotamia was brought about by the two Governments in the hope that such an arrangement would help to lessen their differences elsewhere, notably those that had arisen in connexion with the Bagdad railway and the partition of the Persian oil-territories. Thus offensive and defensive alliances and secret treaties spread through Europe like a plague. In the far East, British interests forced an agreement with Japan concerning the partition of China, Korea and Manchuria. But the making of agreements did not stop with the governments; unofficial groups sprang up everywhere representing the interests of the great concessionaires and international financial corporations by which their respective governments were committed to further schemes of territorial aggrandizement which of necessity could have no other outcome than that of war.

Moreover the great Powers gradually drew the smaller nations into the game. Thus Serbia became a pawn of Russia; and Bulgaria and Turkey, which might have been pawns of Britain, were lost to her through her association with France, and thus became the pawns of Germany. The Anglo-Russian agreement followed naturally from the Franco-Russian agreement; the secret naval agreement between France and Italy which vitiated the old Triple Alliance between Germany, Austria and Italy, now became nec-

essary because of Britain's new commitments. Lord Fisher, Lord French, our own Admiral Sims, and now Colonel Repington in his new volume of memories and many other military and naval big-wigs have boasted quite frankly of their knowledge of various secret arrangements of a naval and military character. Secrecy, of course, was the very essence of this vicious system; and when the inevitable war broke out, another crop of secret treaties became necessary because of the fresh complications which developed with the war. And so the Entente which had been started so hopefully for the admirable purpose of promoting international friendship has ended in enmity and ruin.

In all this there is an object lesson for those who have the foreign policy of this country in their keeping—and for those, too, who by their control and direction of America's financial resources, can commit us all to the secret policies of European governments as deeply as the people of Republican France were committed to the morally and politically bankrupt regime of Tsarist Russia.

THE CRITIC AND THE ORDINARY MAN.

A good deal of current criticism of a journalistic kind—reviews of books and plays, notes on music and art, and the like—leads one to wonder what the critic's function is at the present time, and what the public ought to expect from him. In the first place, no doubt a line should be drawn between the critic and the mere reviewer or writer of notices, and their functions should be kept distinct. To review a book or a play, to summarize it, tell what is in it and what may be had from it—a kind of glorified and disinterested advertising—this is very useful work and by no means to be disparaged. Nearly all our current reviewing, in periodicals and especially in newspapers, is of that order, and one is surprised to see how well it is done, as a rule. But it is not criticism. Any piece of work may be reviewed conscientiously, but not many lend themselves to the purposes of the critic.

Criticism concerns itself only with the best, it has always its eye fixed upon the best; and not one's own little personal and private best, but that which is best according to the established reason and judgment of mankind, "the determination of the judicious," as Aristotle says. Consequently, with the great mass of books, plays, music and works of art now produced around us—or ever produced, for that matter—criticism can do nothing. "It has no place in literature," said Joubert, an admirable critic, of the current output of popular novels in his day; it was all he could say and all that true criticism can ever say. Before a book can come within the purview of criticism, it must claim some sort of place in literature. Before a play can come under the contemplation of criticism, it must, whatever its rank in the category of entertainment, qualify for some sort of place in the drama. The place may, without disparagement, be humble; but some place, humble or exalted, it must have. Dozens of plays are being produced which could be usefully noticed, and hundreds of books are published which could be usefully reviewed; but criticism, concerning itself only with the best, can not say a word or write a line about them because they have no place in literature, no place in the drama.

Those who say that this conception of criticism is narrow and exclusive are the victims of a superficial view. The instinct of mankind in the average is always towards the best, and if wholly free to choose, will always accept and prefer the best.

When the erudite Martinus Scriblerus said that the taste for the bathos was implanted deep in the soul of mankind, he made the mistake of all the pedants since Gamaliel, of overlooking the effect of all the perversions, disabilities and degradations that have been put upon "the vulgar taste" by a society which rigorously interdicts freedom to the individual. Fatigue, poverty, enforced preoccupation with the means of existence, incessant and confusing claims upon the attention, dishevelment under irruptions of commercial propaganda—the marvel is that "the vulgar taste" holds out against all these as staunchly as it does. The reason and judgment of the average man, working without interference and disinterestedly upon any subject, as it so seldom has a chance to do, is found to coincide remarkably with the best reason and judgment of mankind. Think, for example, of the enormous amount of work that politicians, war-makers, journalists and the like, have to do in order to corrupt and deprave this wholesome average of reason and overcome this average of good sense! So also the average of taste, freely developed and freely exercised, shows an astonishing general agreement with the cultivated taste of the critic.

Cardinal Antonelli remarked this fact of his own countrymen; it has been remarked of Russia, under the old regime as well as under the new; and one may remark it anywhere, if one observe with ordinary scientific honesty. It is the foundation upon which every hope of democracy is built. If the average of reason and judgment be unsound, if the average of taste be wayward, then there is nothing for it but that we should all go over to the position of Mr. Henry L. Mencken and do all we can to rehabilitate the idea of aristocracy. But observation warrants our suggesting to Mr. Mencken that he should not be despondent about the vulgar reason and the vulgar taste without seeing what they can do when they are free to do what they want to do. Our complaint against Mr. Mencken is that he expects too much of forces that are fettered; our complaint against the *Clarté* group is that they do not even seem aware that these forces are fettered. Let Mr. Mencken first come over and help to set those forces free; let him help to liberate average reason and average taste so that they may function freely and naturally. Then if they do not function to suit him, he may carry us over into the camp of the aristocracy, bag and baggage.

Criticism, then, in its exclusive concern with the best, unless Mr. Mencken is right and democracy a mere grotesque and extravagant perfectionism, does not express the few but the many; it does not interpret the wisdom and taste of an élite upon a brute mass of wilful and recalcitrant vulgarity. On the contrary, it reflects average judgment and average taste. But it reflects *free* judgment and *free* taste; not the judgment and taste which is established, say, by the commercial sanctions of Gradgrind, the religious sanctions of Chadband, the social sanctions of Quinion, the political sanctions of Pecksniff. These men do not represent the free average judgment and taste of mankind; far from it. Their works and ways, the civilization which they create and dominate, do not represent these things. If not an aristocracy—for Mr. Mencken might split words with us on this point, and win—these men are an oligarchy, and a mighty one. It is they who inhibit, deform and pervert the average opinion and the average taste. It is Gradgrind, Chadband, Quinion and Pecksniff who are the élite. The average is against them, so resolutely against them that, if

Mr. Mencken will allow us to say so, it is all they can possibly do to hold their own. All Mr. Mencken's hatred and implacabilities seem therefore to be misdirected. He is not against the free average of judgment and taste, for he appears never to have thought it worth while to find out what that is. He has taken, as Epictetus finely says, "the appearance of things as the measure of their reality, and made a mess of them." He is really not against democracy but against oligarchy, the oligarchy of Gradgrind, Chadband, Quinion and Pecksniff; and it is because of this essential unity of purpose that, in spite of his fantastic avowals, Mr. Mencken will always be sincerely respected. The great free average which he affects to despise, is with him; and criticism, which expresses that average, is with him too.

Thus it seems to me that the ordinary man may approach the critic more cordially, once having cleared his mind of the idea that the critic is supposed to represent some kind of essential superiority or to afford some kind of pontifical guidance and tutelage. He may confidently make three demands upon the critic. First, tell me what you like, because ten to one it is what I, too, like: never mind wasting space to say what you do not like—life is short, so let that go. Second, tell me why you like it, because then I can justify to myself my own taste, and it is always pleasant to be able to do that since "all mankind naturally desireth knowledge." So take all the space you want; do not be afraid of being repetitious, or stepmotherly about giving examples and illustrations, so that I can see clearly what you are driving at and make sure of all the fine distinctions. It is all interesting. You can hardly overdo it; the Greeks used to say, if a thing is good, let's have it two or three times over. Here is where your scholarship comes in, your special cultural qualifications, so trot them out and put them through their paces, and if you are a little pedantic, without being downright dull, I can stand it! Third, tell me where what you like is to be found, because I do not want to waste my time and energy. Perhaps you like one scene in a current play or one episode in a current novel—all right, pick out that scene or that episode and talk about it, even if the rest of the play or book be worthless. Show its place in the drama or in literature, and why, and all about it, and bring in all the collateral considerations you like, provided they are apposite and significant. That was the method of the great critics and humanists, whether they were talking about literature, art, public affairs or whatever you please—it is all indicated in these three demands. Very well, then, take that method with me and I will go along with you.

"THE STUNNER."

He was one of those peasants who seem very close to creation, as though they had been only yesterday formed by the divine touch out of clay. His body was as abrupt as a grey-limbed tree trunk, and his legs and arms moved stiffly as branches do. Standing close to him in a field or barn one inhaled a vague odour of moss and mould and the bark of trees.

He was a farm-hand, working now for one master now for another. In the fields he would swallow the ochre-coloured cider with an animal's insatiable drought, standing monumental among the corn, with the little, shining, diminutive barrel which we called "his owl" sealed to his lips. All the other labourers feared him. Once in a brawl at the village inn he had knocked a man senseless, his great fist coming down with the crashing force of a falling elm. After this he was always known as "the Stunner."

He lived with his mother in a little cottage on the outskirts of our ancient Wessex village. It was a rough-looking place and most of the windows were broken. It had a garden round

it, but little if any use they made of it. They gathered wilder produce instead—mushrooms, nuts, young nettles. I have passed the Stunner in springtime digging up wild roots as we would carrots or potatoes. He was a queer fellow and was made for running wild in the woods. The mother too, was primitive and savage, with her bleached hair, and tusk-like protruding teeth. One wondered what they talked about, these two, all through the long evenings; what they talked about, and what kind of thoughts they entertained of each other, of their neighbours, and of the earth over which every day the sun rose and set.

When the Stunner's father died I had gone to visit the old woman. "Ee died," she had told me, "wonderful happy. I pointed 'en to the Saviour." I remember well my amazement at hearing her words. It seemed so incredible that that far-off event among the Levantine olive-gardens should have filtered through to her uncultivated intelligence. It was as though some wild woodland animal had suddenly grown grave and spoken of God's Son and His cruel death.

It happened last year in the springtime that I came upon the Stunner lying on the grass amongst the ferns and primroses, with a tall woman from a neighbouring village whose name was Nelly. The afternoon was a fine one; the countryside fresh and beautiful as a daffodil by clear water. In the hedges could be found those delightful, little, furry buds which belong to the willows, and birds' nests full of eggs, cloudy and blue. From the tiny-globed, celandine roots to the topmost twigs of the great forest-trees a strange gladness suffused the vegetable world.

I came upon the couple quite suddenly. The Stunner evidently was amorous; one of his hands, as if it were a padded paw, rested on the woman's shoulder.

Very soon after this he began working for us, looking after the cows like a gigantic sheep-dog, vigilant and erect. I had always been fascinated by him. I got the impression of a being separated in some special way from ordinary existence; aloof, as the silent, self-absorbed mole is aloof, or the deep-digging badger.

As the weeks of midsummer went by I often used to come upon the Stunner with this Nelly of his. At night the lights of a passing carriage would fall upon them leaning over a gate or loitering down some dim honeysuckle lane. But the old woman, hearing of her son's inclinations, did all in her power to throw obstacles in his way. She was jealous; jealous with the dangerous jealousy of an old and lonely woman. By a thousand deceptions and treacheries she endeavoured to keep him with her, sometimes feigning sickness so that he must needs watch by her bed, sometimes weeping, and calling after him, and covering him with evil reproaches. Presently we began to notice a harassed look settling upon the Stunner. When milking, his head would be bowed very low under the flank of his cow and as the days went by he grew more taciturn than ever. August came, and as the weather appeared to be set fine we began our harvest. I shall never forget those days. High up in the zenith the summer sun poured down its rays upon us, and upon the horses, and upon the glittering farm-instruments. The earth dried and cracked under the vertical heat; in some places I could put my pick four feet into the ground. Sweat, silvery, salt sweat, ran down into our mouths and eyes as we worked, and all the time the purple atmosphere danced and quivered.

One day the Stunner was driving the self-binder round and round the ever-diminishing square of gleaming corn, that square which enclosed such a quaint medley of furred and feathered creatures. Suddenly there was a cry and we saw him sway in his iron seat, sway, and fall backwards, like a man shot dead. We all ran towards him. There he lay, his face in the dust, his breath coming and going in an odd, laboured way, like a horse when it is dead beat, and out of his mouth came cider-stained foam. We carried him to the shade of an elm, where it was cool as in a cellar, and there unfastened his shirt. Still he remained unconscious. At last we got him to his home and up to his bed, where he lay, a heavy, inert body, making the whole cottage resonant with its ghastly breathing. "Poor boy, poor boy, 'ee can't go to that bitch now," muttered the old woman, transfixing with an evil look the prostrate figure of her son.

The next morning his breathing was quieter and he had begun to talk; to talk the wild, incessant ramble of a delirious person when the brain seems to run down like the main-spring of a clock. I listened to it for a while, horribly fascinated; for on such occasions, one seems to get an actual glimpse of the inner workings of the grey, human brain uncovered, uncontrolled.

In his delirium he kept talking to his horses in the incom-

prehensible language which peasants reserve for these animals: "Work off," "Comm yer way," just as he had been doing the morning before in the sultry harvest field of the visible world. As one listened to his babbling one got an idea of the simple impressions received by his cerebrum during those last hours, as though on a photographic plate. Then suddenly he would stretch out his arms, his brown, sunburnt arms and call in a husky voice for the woman he loved so dearly, as though she was part of the very foundations of his mind. "Come, Nelly, come," he would cry; and I could not help thinking of another dying man, an English king, who in his last agony had this same name on his lips. I tried to persuade the old woman to send for Nelly, but she would not hear of it.

Three days passed by and still in the vicinity of the cottage could be heard the husky monologue. The very blackbirds and thrushes flitted about uneasily under the currant-bushes outside. On the fourth day as we were coming in from milking in the early morning a scared tramp entered the yard, declaring in a loud tone that he had encountered a ghost, a stark, half-naked ghost, upon the highroad at midnight!

It was the Stunner! Impelled by his passion the man had risen from his death-bed to traverse the miles separating him from the woman he loved. And in the stillness of the night the woman had heard the noise of his coming. She opened her window and listened, and every moment the sound grew more and more distinct, more and more unmistakable. She ran out into the road and there sure enough, advancing with deliberate steps, his bare feet beating upon the August dust, like an animal's pads, was the ghost, the spectre, the apparition of her unhappy lover. He came up to her with loud inarticulate moans, and a moment later she was holding in her arms the dead body of the Stunner, stiff and elongated and smelling of the earth.

LLEWELYN POWYS.

THE IMPASSE IN HOUSING.

THE task of housing the ever-increasing activities of human beings has grown to be one of the greatest industries in the world; and yet to-day it has practically ceased to function. Forces are at work which seem to baffle the intelligence. Take the case of the architect who is constantly facing the economic problems of the building-industry. That he fails to discover what is the cause of the present falling off in production, is due, not to any lack of intelligence on his part, but to that universal fear of facing fundamental truths. Every architect knows by experience how many times his building-projects have had to be modified, cheapened, or abandoned because of the cost of the land on which the building was to stand. After his years of bitter experience, the architect might be expected to realize that as the cost of land goes up, something must happen to the cost of the building. Either the structure must be carried to a great height in order to make it pay a return on the price exacted for the land on which it is built; or else it must be cheapened, the rooms made smaller, and all pretence at "architecture" omitted. This is what has been happening during the past few decades. The whole history of urban building is the record of architecture fighting a hopeless battle against rising land-values and their private appropriation. And yet, except in the case of a few courageous architects, there seems to be no perception of the relation which our present land-system bears to architectural development. The process of privately appropriating the publicly-created increments in land-values is accepted by almost everybody as being one of those obstacles, beneficently contrived to make progress "slow but sure." Our cities grow helter-skelter, in disorderly congestion, with constantly-multiplying needs and a constantly-diminishing purse to meet these needs, until at last the problem reaches the stage of a crisis and bursts upon an astonished public.

To any man with a modicum of brains, it ought to be plain that the land-question has something to

do with this problem. Schemes of "zoning" and "town planning," based on the theory that the community must reserve the right to control land-development have been invoked as remedies. These schemes, it is true, are remedial measures; but they amount to very little, as yet, for there is no general recognition of the iniquity of our land-system. The old individualistic conception of property-rights with no responsibilities is strongly rooted. The control of land by the municipality, for the good of the community, is still a distant goal. But until such a control is an accomplished fact, neither architecture as an art, nor building as a business, has much to hope for. Difficulties may be patched up temporarily; but, in the end, a still greater crisis than the one that now faces us is inevitable.

Although it now has become impossible to build anything at all except at an excessive cost, or to build any kind of shelter which is within the reach of people of small means, every effort is still being made either to hide—or to avoid seeing—the true cause of the trouble. Never before has it been more difficult to shed light on an economic question. Among builders the same ignorance manifests itself as among architects, if the word "ignorance" may be correctly used to describe a wilful avoidance of knowledge. The technicians of the building-industry have faced the bare economic facts too often to leave them anything except the will to ignore. The modern system of supplying buildings offers irrefutable evidence as to what is the matter with the building-industry. Yet not a ray of light seems to penetrate the councils of those who discuss the present impasse in the building-world. In none of their proposed remedies is there any sign of a real economic intelligence, or any hope that an honest diagnosis is likely soon to be made and promulgated. As their professional brothers flounder hopelessly on programmes for educating the public as to its duties, so do the technicians in the industry flounder hopelessly in their fear to face the truth.

Recently there foregathered in Chicago, a handful of men, each eminent in his respective department of the building-industry—architects, engineers, contractors, manufacturers, labour-leaders, and a sprinkling of technical journalists. It was the first conference of its kind in the history of the building-industry in the United States; and it had grown out of a study of the work of the Building Trades Parliament of England, and out of the belief that some such movement ought to be started in this country. The conference, however, was notable in respect of its complete avoidance of anything connected with the realities. The discussion was always of ways and means for "harmonizing" the various interests; the words "service" and "co-operation" were used with all the customary freedom and lack of meaning. Not once was there any reference to profits, or to the land-system, or to our modern credit-system, except to complain of its present unfriendliness to the building-industry. Indeed, credit was the idol before which the conference, as a whole, held its breath in awe and worshipped. "If only investors and banks would lend more money for buildings, everything would be all right," was the general cry. The two or three members of the conference who had passed out of this kindergarten-stage of understanding were in a hopeless minority. Again and again in the course of the proceedings it seemed as though the moment had come when the crucial question, "How shall we divide the profits?" was about to be raised; but every time it was avoided like the plague. It soon became clear, as it always does in gatherings of this kind, that what

men are chiefly concerned with, under our present business-system, is profits. Our commercial system is founded upon the law of profits; and we do not as yet propose to change that law. Men may believe in it or not as they please; but what are we to say of men who talk about "service," "co-operation," and "harmony," under the illusion that these things can be obtained without upsetting the present balance of the profit-making system? That is either stupidity or worse.

The truth of the matter is that the building-industry has passed completely out of the control of those who carry it on. Under the system of investment for profit which now dominates the industry, architects, contractors, engineers, manufacturers, and working men have no voice in the ultimate destiny of their work. Every building-enterprise during the last thirty years at least (with certain exceptions in public work or in private building where expense has been no consideration) has emphasized this fact. Yet the final decision of this Chicago conference was to invite the bankers to join its counsels; because, said the conference, "We are helpless without them." Thus the revealing truth slipped out—only to be lost or ignored—that the art of architecture and the business of building have both been taken over lock, stock and barrel by the money-power. Technicians and workers to-day are all dominated by the profit-makers; just as the craftsmen of olden time were drawn into the modern industrial system and made to give up their traditional faith in good work well done, for the ghastly business of making things that were profitable, whether they were good or not. The modern architect seldom gets a chance to utilize his skill in designing good buildings that shall long endure and serve their purpose. So, too, with the contractor and the manufacturer and the workman. Lashed by the inexorable whip of profit, all must speed up in quantity, and let quality go by the board. It is not the fault of individuals. It is a system. Possibly it can not be changed. Possibly we must go on with our tinkering and patching. Perhaps, the whole matter is not within our power to decide. Nature has yet to utter her verdict, a verdict from which there will be no appeal.

Meanwhile, let our architects remember that the Parthenon and the Erechtheum carried no issue of preferred stock; and that there were no first mortgage bonds issued to pay for the building of the cathedral at Rheims. Our contractors, too, might take note of these things. As for our workmen, do they not already know in their hearts, that their birthright has been sold for a mess of pottage? The building-trades in this country are showing an unmistakable falling off in the quality of work done. They no longer attract to their ranks the class of men who once followed these vocations. But as their "betters" do not see, so the workers do not see that the goal of a shorter day and a higher wage is an illusion. The building-trades' unions are buried more deeply in the quagmire of the past than are those of any other trades. But there are still, thank God, a few good workmen who rebel at having to do poor work, at spoiling their tools on poor materials, at hiding slipshod and even dangerous structural weaknesses with a veneer of sham. The law of good work has not yet wholly lost its traditional hold upon the workman. There are indeed signs, here and there, that some sense is beginning to pervade the ranks of the workers; even though their leaders remain impregnable.

The Building Guilds in England, in their sturdy adherence to the theory that the building-industry

should be based upon a fair wage and no profits, are showing the way to a new order. The seed they are sowing may be long in germinating. It may, indeed, be generations before it bears its fruit. But through the economic programme of these English Guilds runs, also, the precious thread of an ideal of workmanship; the restoration of the crafts to their rightful place in human life; the liberation of the workman from his state of mechanistic slavery, and his return to the function of a creative agent, the return to the idea that the contriving of shelter is first and last the satisfying of a public necessity. But to-day, the building of shelters for human beings stands first and last as a function out of which financial business must first be assured of its profit. No profit, no shelter, is the cry. And it is in helpless acceptance of this situation that these representatives of the building-industry meeting in Chicago are to invite members of the banking-business to join them and thus make the domination of the bankers over the industry more secure than ever!

And yet, the Chicago conference was called with the special object of making a searching analysis of the building-industry. It affirmed this object by resolution, and seemed likely for awhile to devote itself to the slow task of searching out the basic truths which lie at the root of the problem. But it was evident that many of the members of the conference were not satisfied with a programme which might involve a year's delay. Something that could be done quickly at a moment's notice was more to their taste. Thus, one of the speakers laid the whole trouble to the mal-administration of the Democrats; another assailed the income-tax law; a petition urging the merits of the slogan "Exempt New Home Mortgages From Income Tax" seemed to many to offer a satisfactory cure. Much talk was devoted to the problems of transportation and coal. Yet with suggestions that there should be priorities in the shipment of building-materials went lamentations over the fact that money could not be obtained for building at any price! A leading Chicago newspaper in recording the proceedings of the conference thus reported the speech of a prominent building-contractor: "Let's start something on the jump. Let's stimulate building before spring building starts. We know what's the matter; the factors have been thoroughly discussed. I've been telling the contractors that now is the time to build. Prices are lower than a year ago just now, and with things slowing down, the builder can get the best of the workers." And yet in an adjoining column of the paper appeared the following remarks by one of the heads of the lumber-industry who in claiming that the cost of lumber had come down said: "No reductions have taken place in the cost of brick, cement, sand and gravel, nails and hardware, or in labour-costs." The conflict indicated in these two statements was reflected in the conference, when it was several times suggested that a statement should be given out to the effect that the building-industry was now stabilized, that costs could be definitely fixed, and buildings completed within a fixed period!

The conference, however, made no such pronouncement. It could not, of course, do so. But the suggestion indicates the dilemma that will beset the counsels of the building-industry for some time to come. Will it make such a study of itself as was made by the committee on scientific management and reduction of costs appointed by the Building Trades Parliament of England, or will it be content to follow Senator Calder's committee and continue to inject heart-stimulants into the hardened arteries of a very sick patient?

The answer to this question is of great moment to the people of the United States. This is the hour of opportunity for the building-industry. If it will make a searching survey of its problems, discover the part played by our system of land use and tenure, and the part played by taxation, by credit, and by the profit-making system generally, and then courageously tell the result of its discoveries to the American people, as it ought to do, it may pave the way for an era of building-progress in this country such as the world has never seen. For then, with an enlightened land-policy and with the building-industry controlling its own supply of credit through its own co-operative banking-system, our present equipment of skilled technicians would be free to employ their abilities. Then they could meet all needs for human shelter in a way that would satisfy the most passionate ideals of the aesthetes; then they could restore architecture to its true function of building rightly and well; and, then they could make all building into a great creative function to be presided over only by those skilled in the art.

CHARLES HARRIS WHITAKER.

AN INVERTED MIDAS.

EVERY age must have had its choice spirits whose golden fingers turned everything they touched to commonplace. Since we know our own literature best, it seems unreasonably well equipped with those inverted Midases—though there must be some significance in the fact that all Anglo-American writing during the last century has been so exclusively of the middle classes, by the middle classes and for the middle classes. Still, Rome had her Marcus Aurelius, and we may be sure that platitudes would have obscured the slanting sides of the pyramids had stone-cutting in the reign of Cheops been as disastrously easy as printing is to-day. The addition of the typewriter to the printing-press has given a new and horrible impetus to the spread of half-baked thought. The labour of graving on stone, or of breaking tablets of brick, or even of scrawling letters on paper with a pen, is no longer a curb on the dangerous fluency of the inverted Midas. In these modern times he lolls at his ease in a Morris chair, sipping iced tea, dictating to four blonde and two dark-haired stenographers; three novels, a couple of books of travel and a short story written at one and the same time are nothing to a really enterprising universal genius.

We complain that we have no supermen nowadays; that we can not live as widely or as fervently, or get through so much work as could Pico della Mirandola or Erasmus or Politian; that the race is drifting towards mental and physical ænemia. I deny it. This age, too, has its great universal geniuses. They overrun the seven continents and their respective seas. Accompanied by mænadic bands of stenographers, and the music of typewriters deliriously clicking, they go about the world, catching all the butterflies, rubbing the bloom off all the plums, tunnelling mountains, bridging seas, smoothing the facets off ideas, so that they may be swallowed harmlessly like pills. With true Anglo-Saxon conceit we had thought that our own Mr. H. G. Wells was the most universal of these universal geniuses. He has so diligently brought science, ethics, sex, marriage, sociology, God, and everything else—properly deodorized of course—to the desk of the ordinary man, that he may lean back in his swivel chair and receive a faint susurration from the sense of progress and the complexity of life, without even having to go to the

window to look at the sparrows sitting in rows on the telephone-wires. Really, it seemed inconceivable that any one could be more universal than Mr. Wells. Indeed, it was rumoured that in him lay the ultimate proof of Anglo-Saxon ascendancy. What other race had produced a great universal genius?

But all that was before the discovery of Blasco Ibañez.

On the backs of certain of Blasco Ibañez's novels published by the Casa Prometeo in Valencia is this significant advertisement: *Obras de Vulgarizacion Popular*, which may be translated, works of popular vulgarization. Under it appears an astounding list of volumes; all either translated, or edited, or arranged, if not written from cover to cover by one tireless pen—I mean typewriter. Ten volumes of universal history, three volumes of the French Revolution translated from Michelet, a universal geography, a social history, works on science, cookery and house-cleaning, nine volumes of Blasco Ibañez's own history of the European war, and a translation of the Arabian Nights, a thousand and one of them without an hour missing. Works of popular vulgarization—I admit that in Spanish the word *vulgarizacion* has not yet sunk to its inevitable meaning, but can it long stand such a strain? Add to that list a round two dozen novels and some books of travel, and who can deny that Blasco Ibañez is a great universal genius? Read his novels and you will find that he has looked at the stars and knows Lord Kelvin's theory of vortices and the nebular hypothesis and the direction of ocean currents and the qualities of kelp and the way the codfish go in Iceland waters when the northeast wind blows; that he knows all about Gothic architecture and Byzantine painting, the social movement in Jerez and the exports of Bolivia, the wall-paper of Paris apartment-houses and the red paste with which countesses polish their finger nails in Monte Carlo.

And, like the great universal geniuses of the Renaissance, Blasco Ibañez has lived as well as thought and written. He is said to have been thirty times in prison, six times deputy; he has been a cowboy in the pampas of Argentina; he has founded a city in Patagonia with a bull-ring and a bust of Cervantes in the middle of it; he has rounded the Horn on a sailing-ship in a hurricane, and it is whispered that, like Victor Hugo, he eats lobsters with the shells on. He hob-nobs with the universe.

One must admit, too, that Blasco Ibañez's universe is a bulkier, burlier universe than Mr. Wells's. One is strangely certain that the hub of Mr. Wells's universe is fixed in some suburb of London, say Putney, where each house has a bit of garden where waddles an asthmatic pet dog, where people drink tea weak with milk before a gas stove, where every bookcase makes a futile effort to impinge on infinity through the Encyclopædia Britannica, where life is a monotonous going and coming, swathed in clothes that must above all be respectable, to business and from business; an utterly middle-of-the-way existence! But who can say where Blasco Ibañez's universe centres? It is in constant progression.

Starting—like Walt Whitman from fish-shaped Paumonak—from the fierce green fertility of Valencia, the city of another great Spanish conqueror, the Cid, Blasco Ibañez has marched on the world in battle array. The whole astonishing history comes out in the series of novels which at this moment are being translated in such feverish haste for the edification of the American public. The earlier stories tell of the peasants of the Valencian plain, of the

fishermen and sailors of El Grao, the port, a sturdy, violent people living amid a sappy fury of vegetation unexampled in Europe. His method is inspired to a certain extent by Zola, taking from him a little of the newspaper-horror style of realism, with inevitable murder and sudden death in the last chapters. Yet he expresses that life fairly vividly, although even at that period he was given rather to grand, vague ideas than to a careful scrutiny of men and things. He is at home in the strong communal feeling, in the individual anarchism, in the passionate worship of the life-giving water that runs through the fields and of the blades of corn that give bread and of the wine that gives joy, which are the moral make-up of the Valencian peasant. He is sincerely indignant about the land-system, about social inequality, and is full of the revolutionary bravado of his race.

A typical novel of this period is "La Barraca," a story of a peasant family that takes up land which has lain vacant for years under the curse of the community. The struggle of these peasants against their neighbours is told with a good deal of feeling, and the culmination is a splendid bit of blood and thunder. There are many descriptions of local customs, such as the Tribunal of Water that sits once a week under one of the portals of Valencia's cathedral to settle disputes concerning irrigation rights, a little dragged in by the heels, to be sure, but still well worth reading. Yet even in these early novels one feels over and over again the force of that terrible phrase, popular vulgarization. Valencia is being vulgarized for the benefit of the universe. The proletariat is being vulgarized for the benefit of the people who buy novels.

From Valencia, Blasco Ibañez seems to have made raids on other parts of Spain. "Sonnica la Cortesana" gives us antique Saguntum and the usual Aves, wreaths, fluteplayers and the usual claptrap of costume novels. In "La Catedral" we have Toledo, the church, socialism and the modern world in the shadow of Gothic spires. "La Bodega" takes us into the genial air of the wine vaults of Jerez-de-la-Frontera with smugglers, processions blessing the vineyards and agrarian revolt in the background. So far these have all been Spanish novels written for Spaniards; it is only with "Sangre y Arena" that the virus of a European reputation begins to show results. In "Sangre y Arena," to be sure, one learns that toreros use scent, that they have a home life and are seduced by passionate Baudelairian ladies of the smart set who plant white teeth in their brown, sinewy arms and teach them to smoke opium cigarettes. One sees these toreros taking the sacraments before going into the ring, and then one sees them being tossed by the bull while the crowd, which a moment before had been crying *hola* as if it didn't know that something was going wrong, gets very pale and chilly and begins to think what dreadful things bullfights are anyway, until the arrival of the next bull makes them forget their qualms. All of which is very good fun when not obscured by those grand, vague ideas; and incidentally, it sells like hot cakes. Thenceforward the Casa Prometeo becomes an exporting house dealing in the good old Spanish products of violence and sunshine, blood, voluptuousness and death, as another vulgarizer put it.

Next comes our author's expedition to South America, and "Los Argonautas" appears. The Atlantic is bridged; there open up rich veins of pictur-esque ness and new grand, vague ideas, and everything is in full swing when the war breaks out. Blasco

Ibañez meets the challenge nobly, and very soon, with "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," captures the whole Allied world, and proves again the *mot* about prophets. So without honour in their own country are the "Four Horsemen" that the English translation rights are sold for a paltry three thousand pesetas. But the great success of the book in England and America shows that we know how to appreciate the good judgment of a neutral who came in and rooted for our side; and so early in the race, too! While the iron is still hot another four hundred pages of well-sugared pro-Ally propaganda appears, "Mare Nostrum," which mingles scientific information about Amphitrite and submarines in one grand chant of praise before the Mumbo-Jumbo of nationalism.

"Los Enemigos de la Mujer," Blanco Ibañez's latest production, abandons Spain entirely and plants itself in the midst of princes and countesses, all elaborately pro-Ally, at Monte Carlo. Forgotten the proletarian tastes of his youth, the local colour he loved to lay on so thickly, the Habañera atmosphere. Only the grand, vague ideas remain in the cosmopolite; and the fluency, that fatal Latin fluency.

And now the United States, the home of the blonde stenographer and the typewriter and the press agent. What are we to expect from the combination of Blasco Ibañez and Broadway? At any rate the movies will profit.

Yet one can not help wishing that Blasco Ibañez had not learned the typewriter trick so early. Printed words so easily spin a web of the commonplace over the fine outlines of life. And, after all, Blasco Ibañez need not have been an inverted Midas. He is a superbly Mediterranean type, with something of Aretino, something of Garibaldi, something of Tartarin of Tarasçon. Blustering, sensual, enthusiastic, living at bottom in a real world—which can hardly be said of Anglo-Saxon vulgarizers—even if it is a real world somewhat obscured by grand, vague ideas, Blasco Ibañez's mere energy would have produced interesting things if it had not found such easy and immediate vent in the typewriter. Bottle up a man like that for a lifetime without means of expression and he produces memoirs equal to Marco Polo's and Casanova's, but let his energies flow out evenly without resistance through a corps of clicking machines, and all you have is one more popular novelist.

It is unfortunate, too, that Blasco Ibañez and the United States should have discovered each other at this moment. They will do each other no good. In this country we have a superabundance both of vague, grand ideas and of popular novelists, and we are the favourite breeding place of the inverted Midas. We need writing that shall be acid, with sharp edges on it, and yeasty to leaven the lump of glucose that the combination of decayed puritanism with the ideals of the man in the swivel chair has made of our national consciousness. Of course Blasco Ibañez in America will be only a nine days' wonder. Nothing is ever more than that with us. But why need we pretend every time that our nine days' wonders are the great eternal things?

Then, too, if the American public is bound to take up Spain, it might as well take up the permanent things instead of the works of popular vulgarization. We have enough of those in our bookcases as it is. And in Spain there is a novelist like Baroja, essayists like Unamuno and Azorin, poets like Valle Inclan and Antonio Machado . . . But I suppose that henceforth they will shine with the reflected glory of the author of "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse."

JOHN R. DOS PASSOS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WORLD.

III. GRAND OPERA IN LOTUS LAND.

BEFORE the *première* the good ladies of Honolulu boycotted the grand-opera company because its management persisted in the use of billboard-advertising, which was taboo. Therefore the company quickly stranded. The artists were on the streets, and there were no ties to Manhattan. I was in a Japanese restaurant one morning when one of the singers entered. He went directly to the cashier. From his pocket he pulled forth five coppers. "Can I have a cup of coffee for these?" he asked.

I had not hitherto been much addicted to grand opera—I hated to leave the beach at night—but this dramatic revelation that artists were very human and needed support put it all in a different light. So when the company reorganized and started again I became a regular patron and quite ignored the ukulele-concert at Moana.

As a gallery god in the Honolulu Opera House I found myself in strange company. Few persons of the Latin race were present, except on the stage, and the odour of garlic which is characteristic of *paraiso* elsewhere was missing. Hawaiian girls in cool, white dresses, Japanese schoolboys eager for culture, a sprinkling of Chinese, a few American soldiers and sailors and myself made up the last flight crowd. During the intermissions the Hawaiian girls assiduously studied "The Stories of the Operas." I can not guess what the Chinese thought of it all.

I had my section of bench before an open window at the rear of the gallery. Through the opening the famous old Iolani Palace, and sometimes the tropical moon, were plainly in view. The beautiful park of royal palms and banyan trees often distracted my attention from the stage and on hot nights seemed to summon me to the great out-of-doors. For a week there sat beside me nightly an Italian-Swiss ship's carpenter who was probably the only person in the house who understood what the singing was all about. He compared every note with corresponding notes that he had heard at the Metropolitan Opera House or l'Opéra Nationale, and bored me much.

It was the rainy season when the troupe performed, and a plague descended on the house in the form of swarms of mosquitoes. Many sublime arias were sung to an accompaniment of insect humming, and very frequently an angry slap was heard above the high notes. Then there came a second plague in the form of bill-collectors and deputy sheriffs. The attendance had been small, and one night in the third week an attachment of costumes and a postponement of the evening's performance were simultaneously announced. On the next night Society, moved perhaps by press-reports of the artists' indigence, went to the opera-house in large numbers, only to find that "La Bohème" could not be sung because during the afternoon a firm of attorneys for a local furniture store had disrupted the whole organization in an attempt to collect a bill for seventeen dollars for the rental of properties.

There followed hours of tears and lamentations. In the sad words of the orchestra conductor: "It was all a mistake. We believed that we were wanted here and that we would be a success. It was not so. The people of Honolulu, they do not want us. They did not come, so we go broke!"

The Governor of the Territory and other persons of prominence assisted the members of the troupe to pay their room rentals and recover their clothing. And it was publicly announced that the manager of the company had withdrawn the seven dollars and fifty cents which remained to his credit at a local bank. After some delay the company was encouraged to resume its performances, with a uniform charge of fifty cents per seat, and in consequence I left my place in the gallery. On one occasion Queen Liliuokalani herself was present in a box. The company sang "Thais," struggling under a handicap due to the fact that one could see through the scenery on the badly-painted drops to the settings beyond. Thus in one scene the audience looked directly through the desert to an interior. Finally the artists gave up in despair. Some of them gave a "Grand Concert" which included ragtime numbers. The stars sang for a time in the city cafés, and the lesser members of the company borrowed passage-money or worked their way back to the Coast. A few left by steerage. Seeing all this, I thought of Tonio in "I Pagliacci" and his well-proved contention that the stage is a world and all its actors and actresses merely people.

Soon the opera season was quite forgotten. Having attended all the performances that followed the scene in the

Japanese restaurant I felt that I had done my duty to Art. I went back to my hammock on a *lanai* near Waikiki. There each night I drank much lemonade and lighted many sticks of punk to intimidate stray mosquitoes. And I often thought, and sadly, of the failure of the troupe. At length I found a friend who played a guitar, and he took me to a place of rest with "Mother Machree" and "The Spanish Fandango" and other things, so I too, forgot. After all, I concluded, it is the lesser arts that are best adapted to *dolce far niente*, and opera-singers should stay away from Lotus-Land!

HARRY W. FRANTZ.

POETRY.

SHAKESPEARE.

Behind the arras of three hundred years
Still rise the storied spires of London Town;
And still the tread of ruffled cavaliers
Echoes in thronging streets of old renown.
The busy ferries dart from shore to shore,
Southampton hurries to the newest play,
And, smiling, through the city's savage roar,
As one who journeys a familiar way,
I see him pass along with stately stride,
To join his friends where Mermaid's sign is swung,
With Burbage or with Jonson by his side,
And all of wisdom on his jewelled tongue.

Sweet Master Will—dear Will!—twixt you and me
Three centuries, and yet how close are we!

DUMAS.

Now do we don the spectacles of glamour:
Conjure me, Prince, the soul of old Romance . . .
Out of the distance shrills an ancient clamour,
And through the mists the phantom hosts advance.
Night—and the voice of trumpets, redly screaming;
Hoofs in the darkness, echoing and gone;
Swords in the moonlight, kissing, sparkling, gleaming;
Tumult of men, and banners in the dawn . . .
Conjure me women gowned in flagrant fashion,
It is enough so that their eyes be bright,
So that their lips be bittersweet with passion;
I would be blade and lover, too, this night . . .

Blue of the Sky! These tavern dogs are snails.
Wine for the Master, ere his magic fails!

FALSTAFF.

Sir John, that loved the tankard and the frail—
Fat rascal that you were, upon my word,
For all your frantic follies and absurd
Adventures—Gad! I love you as good ale.
Nay, John, it is because of them, I vow,
I love you most. Od's-bodikins and s'death!
You would have wrung a chuckle from Macbeth,
Had Master Will but cast you right know . . .
And that "Blue Boar," which Master Irving sought,
And failed to find—I find it frequently.
And Mistress Page, and Mistress Ford . . . Ah me!
The deeds, good John, that you and I have wrought.

Yet two plays only know your jocund bawl . . .
Dear Jack! I would that you were in them all!

PICKWICK.

Immortal name, and thrice immortal man!
Your hand, Sir, o'er the board, and o'er the years.
God bless your spectacles, your eyes, your ears,
Your gaiters, and your crazy caravan!
You draw my laughter, Sir, as few men can,
And—dash it all!—sometimes you draw my tears.
Once more your hand, and (Sam! Cry two more beers!)
Your health, Sir, and the health of all your clan!

So, some day, I shall meet my oldest friend,
And so, some day, I'll greet him as he drinks . . .
'Twill be in some old inn, in some quaint town.
A buxom widow shall our needs attend,
A fire shall snap beside us, and, methinks
I'll try to drink that genial toper down!

VINCENT STARRETT.

ART.

ART IN AMERICA.

I

AMERICAN collectors are doing an invaluable service in raising art standards to a higher level in this country, for the competition among them to know and to acquire the best, necessarily results in our obtaining an ever-better type of work from abroad; and, at the same time, it encourages our native artists to strive harder than they have done before. But the term "art" in America is not and should not be restricted to the possessions of a few private individuals or even of a few public museums: the question is rather what is America's understanding of art and what is it doing with it.

In discussing this subject the first factor to consider is that art—at least in its traditional expressions—interests only a very small part of our population. If this were not so, private collections in America would be in most cases accessible to visitors, as they very frequently are in Europe, where public museums and galleries are incomparably more numerous and richer than our own. Despite the fact that great collections of old masters are always open to the public in London and that great modern pictures are freely to be seen in Paris, (or, perhaps, just because of these facts) Lord Ellesmere feels, nevertheless, that he should allow the public to view his Titians and other treasures whenever they may make application to do so; and across the Channel, M. Pellerin reserves two afternoons each week for all who may care to see the Cézannes in his house—the more intimate living-rooms being thrown open as well as the *salon* and the library. From time to time certain American collectors have admitted visitors to their galleries but apparently with unsatisfactory results, for as far as I know, there is not one private gallery in this country to-day that can be seen by a student who does not possess special credentials for admission. And this is not because American collectors regard their pictures as being mere personal and private possessions; it is largely because the public, as a whole, does not sufficiently understand and appreciate a work of art. For surely if it did, the art-patron's instinctive desire for admiration of his treasures, if no better quality in him, would bid him open his doors.

But why is there not more appreciation of art in this country? I think the reason is two-fold: first, there is no opportunity in America, outside of a few of the larger cities, to see the great works of the past, which is the sole and necessary condition for loving them; second, America does not yet possess a sufficiently settled body of ideas out of which to create an art of its own, the appreciation of which would not depend on a knowledge of the classics. It would itself bring the ability to value them, all art being essentially the same.

When we come to consider the question from the standpoint of forming an appreciation of art from the examples already produced, we find ourselves in the dilemma I have already touched on—the lack of a desire for art being the cause for its absence, and the absence of art explaining the general lack of understanding of, and desire for it. This condition, however, will be remedied little by little as individuals here and there come forward and spread the idea that an interest in art is not a fad or a weakness but an intellectual possession that the strongest mind can think upon, profit by and enjoy. When there are enough persons in a community who know what art

is and feel the need for it in their lives, there will be no more trouble about the management of our art museums. From coast to coast our museum-officials know from experience that to-day one of their greatest difficulties is to get a response in terms of public interest, proportionate to the value of the works exhibited and to the expenditure of effort by the few enthusiasts who maintain and direct these institutions.

Another vicious circle, having the same centre as the one I have just referred to, is that in which the artist turns in the matter of securing payment for his work. An American artist of moderate reputation sells a picture for \$500, let us say. A picture by a French artist many times as good may sell for only \$100. But where the American sells five pictures in a year, the Frenchman sells twenty-five and thus has the same income—to say nothing of the greater purchasing power of his \$2,500. There is much talk, therefore, of the short-sightedness of American artists in putting high prices on their works. But artists in this country who have experimented with low prices, find that, as a matter of fact, they sell their pictures no more frequently; indeed, they are often looked on as having cheapened themselves, and the net result is that they get less money.

But the fact remains that we should have far more art-buyers in this country, and we should be educating the public to the idea that possessing beautiful things is not the sole privilege of the very rich, if all our art exhibitions were to contain large numbers of really good works purchasable at from twenty to fifty dollars each; just as one finds all the time at the art-shows in Paris. In many cases, the artist in Paris lives by his art, modestly at first, or miserably if need be; yet he lives. The bitter thing for the artist in this land of plenty, is that for many years he can not live by his work, unless he is willing to make it acceptable to the most ignorant of the groundlings; which means that he must forfeit the chance of doing the kind of thing that gives him his only true satisfaction and justification for existence.

The few exceptions to this rule do not impair its validity; the great majority of American artists who have done estimable work have got a living from other sources than the work itself—until after those years when freedom is so vital. No one can follow a group of young artists from the time when they start out on their career, full of ability, enthusiasm and ideals, to the time, say ten years later, when they are restaurant-clerks, policemen, brokers, machinists, commercial "artists," or in their graves from starvation—I have particular men in mind as examples of each of these cases—no one can witness these tragedies and not feel that there is something radically wrong with a society that permits such a waste of the very talent it needs most of all. And yet the only practicable solution of the problem seems to be, at present, for us to try somehow to increase the number of persons in America who care enough for an artist's work to buy something from him occasionally.

The way to meet this problem is not by means of governmental support, at least not in any form now known. It is a matter for rejoicing, that art is free from any such assistance in this country. France contributes to the support of French art through governmental channels, and France produces the great art of the world to-day; but that is because French genius is so vigorous that it takes no account of the burden of officialdom. To see French official art at its sorry best, one has only to go through the Luxembourg, where the one good collection was given by a private individual and was accepted only after the violent

opposition of the government faction had succeeded in excluding many of the best works which M. Caillebotte had bequeathed to the nation. But to see the worst that officialdom in art is capable of, one must go to an annual exhibition that few Americans seem to know about—that of the French Government's purchases from the *salons* and exhibitions of the year. The beholder would laugh, if the thing were not so ghastly, for there one sees displayed what the deputies from the provinces know to be—or believe to be—to the taste of their constituents. We have here a partial and negative proof, but nevertheless a real one, of the depth to which art has its strong roots in the French nation, when we reflect that each year it sends up fresh, green shoots above the heavy deposit of ashes that the Government spreads over the soil. And as we usually find French pictures of even the most ignoble conception executed with a certain ability and with a certain kind of taste, one can not help feeling that in America there is a considerable chance that a still baser product than even the worst French art would be patronized by our bureaucrats. Would our officials approach their task in a more idealistic spirit than do their French confrères? If they tried any such thing they would soon find that it did not pay. Ask the editor of any popular magazine what his experience has been whenever he has attempted to attain a better art-level in his illustrations—he will tell you that he has very soon received unmistakable signs that his subscribers did not want any "uplift business."

And after all their attitude, perhaps, is logical enough. Advances must be begun at the top: not by trying to cajole the public into accepting something less bad than what it has had before, but by always giving it the best there is until at last enough people recognize its worth. This policy, however, is possible for an individual who needs only to get his living, somehow or other, while he keeps at work; it is not possible for a big commercial enterprise or a governmental bureau which must get its results in a short time, or succumb to competition.

There can be no doubt about it, our Government deserves the hearty thanks of all art-lovers in America for keeping its hands off. Various schemes that would doubtless prove beneficial have, indeed, been suggested. Mr. Clive Bell, the English critic, for example, has suggested that any person wishing to be an artist be given a bare living from the public funds; the idea being that the meagreness of such a life would prove unattractive to the mere idler. It appears from reports that something of the kind is being tried to-day in Soviet Russia. But the possibility that such an experiment will ever be made in America, with the fulness of opportunity and for the length of time necessary to enable us to judge of its results, is so extremely unlikely as to make it scarcely worth discussing here. And yet such a plan has all the savour of that better time one can not help dreaming of, when the lust for possession, which must surely be approaching its climax in this epoch, will be displaced by an ideal of achievement in the intellectual domain. The ghoulish ugliness of the work of governments and men in this *post bellum* period makes that better time seem far off indeed; but though the spirit that makes for the right standard of values is slow and weak to-day, it is a deathless spirit and we can not say the hour or the day when it is to receive a mighty access of force, a power that will enable it to sweep through all the mass of mankind.

WALTER PACH.

(To be concluded.)

MISCELLANY.

THOSE who despair of discrimination in American concert audiences may take heart by comparing them with similar audiences in Paris, London and other European capitals, so says a friend of mine who has just returned from a trip to Europe. Intelligent amateurs here often express the belief that our concert-goers are backward in true appreciation and insist that such egregious failure to perceive true values as we often witness is impossible in a European music centre. It is a comfort to be assured that artistic astigmatism is international. This manifests itself with regard to construction of programmes, choice of soloists, and quality of performance.

IN my friend's view no conductor in a big American city would dare to present such programmes as Sir Henry Wood has been offering to his London audiences during the past three months—programmes which were all too long and, with few exceptions, arranged, or thrown together, with no apparent design. Close to a classic symphony would come a ballad representing a school of music that one imagined to be obsolete, sung in a manner to match its quality, and, disappointingly enough, the response of the audience would be as enthusiastic for the one as for the other. The large audiences on the evenings of the best programmes, as with us, were hopeful signs. Also—as at New York popular concerts—the soloists represented the best and the worst. Apparently the slime of the piano-manufacturer's influence is slow to be eradicated on both sides of the Atlantic.

SIR HENRY, my friend reports, strives to look and act like a temperamental continental. But hair liberally uncut, black beard, unrestrained gesture and wild exaggeration are unsatisfying substitutes for interpretation. The erraticism of his dynamics, the distortion of *tempi* and the unwarranted *rubato* that mark his readings tickle the groundlings, but their approval is based of course, on a desire for sensation, not for perfection.

How different is M. Rhené-Baton, who is conducting the Pasdeloup Concerts in Paris! This handsome type of Frenchman, serene, yet nervously expressing in his person every nuance of the music, leads with economy of energy (though without such restraint as Dr. Muck taught us to admire) yet with admirable grace. Sometimes when he is conducting, he will lay down the wand and use only his eloquent hands—not doubling them into fists as often as Safonov did to such effect when he presided over the Philharmonic, and as Colonne did. The Paris orchestra, I hear, is composed of splendid material and is trained to a fine point. They are saying in Paris that all their wine is watered now, and it is certainly true that they began, years ago, to water their music. But this dilution becomes potable when served by the men who mix it, which leads me to suggest that if France is sincerely desirous of encouraging artistic relations with us she had better keep her Messagers and Wolffs home and send us her Rhené-Batons.

YOUNG writers and artists sometimes believe that to be original is to have no origins. Perhaps the best reason for teaching the history of painting or literature is to show the pathetic error of this point of view. The work of every artist is deeply embedded in the personalities with whom he has been in contact and the places in which he has lived: it takes not a whit from the profound originality of Turner and Whistler to indicate that they both had the good fortune to live at one period of their lives along Chelsea Reach and could there watch daily the unceasing transformations of colour, light, and mass as the sun waned in the western sky and on the Thames the barges passed, crowned with distant lights from bridges and wharves. The Chelsea School, the Glasgow School, the Venetian School, the School of Verrocchio, the Pre-Raphaelite School—what are these designations

but acknowledgements of the importance of places and personalities, as a means of giving the beginner the impetus of a tradition?

BUT it is one thing to appreciate the importance of a school, and another to show even in a rough way what any particular artist's origins were. The difficulty exists for the reason that as long as the social heritage is preserved, there is nothing to prevent a tradition from lying fallow for millenniums; as the Roman tradition in architecture and the Egyptian mode in decoration did, before social and personal conditions have reached a point of development at which it is possible for an artist to take up the old thread again and weave it vigorously into a new pattern. What we call a new tradition in art, is sometimes not so much a departure from the parent stock, as a reversion to some more elemental example of it. (Consider the work of the neo-primitives. And were not the maternal breasts that Gaston Lachaise procreates once carried in a phallic procession?) A healthy art thrives on tradition; it is only a paling art, like that of the last couple of centuries in Italy, which gets stifled by a tradition; and in such cases it is not the presence of dead art that is to blame so much as the absence of living artists. A good tradition is a healthy mother: the danger of a tradition lies in the weak, neurotic attraction of an Oedipus complex; and this is but the accidental misfortune of an indispensable relationship.

WHEN one finds an artist divorced from contemporary schools, and yet plainly modelling, writing, or painting with the superb assurance that people gain only in association, it is a rather fascinating sport to range back through the centuries and attempt to discover where his particular thread was dropped. Puvis de Chavannes's work used to seem to me something of an anomaly; and I had no suspicions of his stem, until I came upon Il Perugino's picture of the Virgin, St. Joseph and the Shepherds Adoring the Infant Saviour, in the British National Gallery. The flat tones, the tepid colours, the soft veil of atmosphere, and the simple composition—a simplicity the later artist subtly elaborated—pointed manifestly to some contact between the nineteenth century Frenchman and the fifteenth century Italian. Of course, it pointed at the same time to some kindred quality in their make-up which made it possible for the one to take up and develop the methods of the other. I have not made any efforts to verify this suspicion by looking into Puvis de Chavannes's biography; but it is as likely as not that such a development would be left out of a biography. An afternoon at some gallery in communion with Il Perugino might have been enough to strike sparks in the tinder of the painter's adolescence, and when the smouldering stuff flamed up in maturity he might not even have been able to guess where the divine fire had come from. One of the necessities of being original, perhaps, is to have the ability to forget one's origins!

I HAVE just been hearing an improving story about a certain canny Frenchman, who is doing a bit of colonial exploitation on his own. The particular preserve on which he is poaching is that brightest jewel in the British Crown, India. It appears that Monsieur has a large establishment in Brussels devoted to the production of handmade laces, and he has found business gloriously easy ever since the war. But, alas, the labour supply is unequal to the demand. In order to avert the painful necessity of paying higher wages the ingenious Frenchman has found a way to produce "Belgian" handmade lace elsewhere for less money. The Brussels girls, working at home, by the piece, average forty-five centimes per hour; which at present exchange-rates equals about five cents. This, thinks our thrifty Jean, is about the limit. But where shall he turn for aid in his distress; France? Too late. Creusot and other producers by machinery, by extravagant wartime wages, have spoiled the erstwhile handworkers and, speaking broadly, the hand loom and the needle are things of the past in France.

So Jean looks far afield and his eyes light on a people—315,000,000 of them—many of whom are already trained to do his work, and most of whom are very poor. So poor, indeed, that they would drop dead of fright if anyone offered them forty-five centimes an hour—which, of course, nobody would think of doing. Possessed by this happy thought our practical Frenchman sends a set of models to India and in the course of time receives Indian duplicates, so perfect that the observer—at least an untrained one—wonders whether even experts can discern the difference; and now this lucky lace-maker is on his way to India to arrange for the very maximum of production, for the demand for real handmade Brussels lace, in the United States and South America especially, is far beyond the capacity of the Belgian equipment. It is extremely doubtful if our provident friend will undersell himself, but it is certain that he will not fail to threaten the use of a powerful weapon of Indian manufacture if the Belgian peasant-profiteer (forty-five centimes per hour) becomes too demanding. *Les affaires sont les affaires!*

JOURNEYMAN.

THE THEATRE.

MR. GALSWORTHY SEES IT THROUGH.

NEW YORK has had an unusual opportunity, during the last few weeks, to observe the mental development of an artist whose social outlook on the life of his time is as courageous as it is honest and penetrating. Mr. John Galsworthy has been represented simultaneously—and in both cases admirably represented—by "The Mob," an *ante-bellum* composition at the Neighbourhood Playhouse; and, at the Bijou Theatre, by "The Skin Game," his most recent play. These two dramas give a clear insight into the mind and imagination of their author, and reveal him as one of the few, outstanding writers for the theatre who has come unseared through the tension and disillusionment of the great war.

When, at the height of war-frenzy, our leading artists, literary and otherwise, were turning their hands to the gentle art of propaganda, it was a moot point whether Mr. H. G. Wells, with his religious footnotes to politics, Mr. Arnold Bennett, with his publicity bureau of British self-praise, Sir James Barrie, dallying with sentiment and spiritism, and Mr. Galsworthy, making speeches and writing essays explanatory of Allied ideals, would ever be free men and artists again. For had they not sold their souls to the god of expediency? After thinking and speaking and writing in the black-and-white prejudice of war-time, could they ever return to a discriminating appraisal of human motives and ideals? Could they ever regain the confidence of the public in their disinterestedness; or would they have to resign in favour of others whom the new day might bring forth?

And now it seems that Mr. Galsworthy is the first fully to regain the poise of an impartial arbiter. The man who flung the gauntlet of "The Mob" at the complacent hypocrisy of British imperialism has come back, at the end of a great war supposedly waged on a higher plane, to indict in "The Skin Game" the hypocrisy which arises from the use of force and violence, no matter what may be the motive. In Mr. Wells's overused phrase, Mr. Galsworthy sees it through, and he sees it through to a *dénouement* which is chastening in its quiet relentless ness. In the parallel which may be drawn between the outcome of the struggle between the two families, the Hillcrists and the Hornblowers, and the sorry mess which the war and the peace have made of Europe, lies that subtle and penetrating commentary on life which is the forte and the prerogative of the artist. Because Mr. Galsworthy does not emphasize this parallel, it does not follow that he does not, therefore, intend it to be drawn. Of all his contemporaries Mr. Galsworthy is, perhaps, the least inclined to label the social implications of his plays. One remembers his admirable saying in his volume of essays, "Another Sheaf":

What, then, is lying at the back of any growth or development there may have been of late in drama! In my belief, simply an outcrop of sincerity—of fidelity to mood, to impression, to self. A man here and there has turned up who has imagined something true to what he has really seen and felt, and has projected it across the footlights in such a way as to make other people feel it. . . . It is not cant to say that the only things vital in drama, as in every art, are achieved when the maker has fixed his soul on the making of a thing which shall seem fine to himself. It is the only standard; all the others—success, money, even the pleasure and benefit of other people—lead to confusion in the artist's spirit, and to the making of dust-castles. To please your best self is the only way of being sincere.

Mr. Galsworthy has pleased himself, therefore, by telling us in "The Skin Game" the story of the Hillcrists and the Hornblowers, the aristocrats and the upstarts, the story of traditional ideals ranged against business-ideals. But he has not told it with the time-worn sentimentality of Robertson's "Caste" and its numerous progeny, of which Major Ian Hay Beith's "Happy-Go-Lucky" is the most recent exemplar. Instead, he has pared appearances to the bone, and has revealed the secret emotions of both sides. It is a "skin game" his protagonists are playing; and Mr. Galsworthy himself wields the scalpel on them as relentlessly as they do on each other. Out of the struggle between the two families there emerges in clear terms the degradation which any ideal must suffer when it puts its faith in the justification of means by ends. Whether Mr. Galsworthy will or no, the auditors at his play can not help seeing in this conflict and in its dire consequences a close analogy to the larger world outside the theatre, a world brutalized by violence, a world ruled by class-selfish and nationally-selfish demagogues. An indictment of all our elder statesmen rings out in this statement of young Hornblower's philosophy:

He thinks old people run the show too much. He says they oughtn't to, because they're so damtouchy. . . . He says they'll be no world fit to live in till we get rid of the old. We must make them climb a tall tree, and shake them off it. . . . Otherwise, with the way they stand on each other's rights, they'll spoil the garden for the young. . . . I want to enjoy things, Dodo, and you can't do that when everybody's on the hate.

The better side of aristocracy, of gentility, speaks in Hillcrist's protest at the use of Chloe Hornblower's secret as a weapon with which to intimidate his opponent: "I say no, Amy. I won't have it. It's a dirty weapon. Who touches pitch shall be defiled"; and the ideals of youth shrinking from corruption in Jill's oft-repeated warning to her father: "Pitch! Dodo! Pitch!" Hillcrist's surrender, too, is characteristic of a certain modern, disillusioned honesty: "It's the utmost I'll consent to, Amy; and don't let's have any humbug about it's being morally necessary. We do it to save our skins." And Hillcrist speaks for all sensitive imaginations when he asks:

What is it that gets loose when you begin a fight, and makes you what you think you're not? What blinding evil! Begin as you may, it ends in this—skin game! Skin game! . . . When we began this fight, we had clean hands—are they clean now? What's gentility worth if it can't stand fire?

"What's gentility worth if it can't stand fire?" Many a disheartened soul in Europe—and in America, too—is asking itself that question. Perhaps the answer depends on the fibre of the gentility in question and on the weapons it is willing to use. The gentility of Stephen More in "The Mob" stood fire; but who does not believe that the gentility of More's opponents, smug in its moment of triumph, stood abashed in later years.

In many ways, the earlier play reflects the same philosophy as the later. Written around a hypothetical war, similar to many which England had waged in the past, it is easy to understand why Mr. Galsworthy preferred to hold back its public presentation until after the close of the world-conflict. Its author, apparently, was willing to wait and see whether the proclaimed ideals of 1914 could stand the test of time—and now amid the tragic ruins he asks us to look upon them, as he does, only in pity, not in scorn.

"The Skin Game," like "The Mob," may be read not only backwards, but forwards; it is as much a prophecy

for the future as a commentary upon the past. With its domestic, realistic analogy in personal struggle, it warns of disaster ahead should the social and industrial conflict venture upon the same dangerous path. In that prophecy, unimpeded by preaching or propaganda, Mr. Galsworthy returns to the rôle of artist and philosopher.

OLIVER M. SAYLER.

THE ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT AGAIN.

It is a common superstition among theatre-goers that a dramatic critic is never quite happy unless he is finding fault. If such were really the case, surely a dramatic critic in New York these days would be the happiest creature alive. In more than fifty theatres, every night, a thousand actors struggle, with a resultant production of intelligent entertainment that is astonishingly small. There are, undoubtedly, too many theatres; it is not humanly possible to find good plays for all of them; or indeed, for even half of them, at the same time. By the same token, there are too many actors; the skilled ones are scattered thinly through too many companies. Even after the right manager has found the good play, he has yet to assemble the perfect company, who shall work harmoniously together. Once Huxley sat down to luncheon, and remarked that no doubt evolution, in the course of ages, might bring together lettuce, tomatoes, oil, salt, pepper, into a complete salad. "Yes," said his wife, "but not such a nice one as I have made for you." If we wait for evolution to produce good plays well on Broadway, we may have to wait a long time. What we need is a Mrs. Huxley.

Just now a young man named Brock Pemberton, trained by Mr. Arthur Hopkins, has assumed the rôle of that amiable lady, and has mixed the ingredients of a delightful theatrical salad. Selecting as his leading woman player Miss Gilda Varesi, an actress who for years has been permitted to exhibit a flaming talent in tiny rôles, and as his play, a comedy written by this same Miss Varesi and Miss Dolly Byrne, called "Enter Madame," he has excellently picked and excellently drilled a supporting cast, and put forth an entertainment notable alike for the smooth, illusive, vivid quality of its performance, and the sprightly intelligence of its subject matter. It is "as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," and into this grateful and comforting shadow men and women are nightly flocking. At the risk of perversity, one critic must confess that it makes him glad.

"Enter Madame" is a character study. The theme is not new. A brilliant opera singer, temperamental, fantastic, egotistical, yet good-hearted and tenderly in love with her handsome and unartistic husband, returns from European triumphs to find him seriously entangled with a commonplace female who offers him what he thinks his heart desires—a quiet home, with slippers by the hearth. He does, indeed, divorce the singer, and for an instant the blow to her heart is shown in Miss Varesi's intense acting. But the key of comedy is too finely maintained for sentimentalities. On the very night of the divorce the singer invites her husband and his second-wife-to-be, to a dinner in her apartment. There are present her whole quaint retinue, including an Italian *chef* who plays the flute, an Italian maid who sings, a personal physician (also Italian) who can accompany the anvil chorus by tapping tumblers with his fork. The dinner is as gay as it is unconventional, and the charm of his wife, the charm of this old, care-free, child-like, fascinating life, steals upon the husband. The upshot of the play is that he elopes with his own wife again, fleeing to South America to escape the prospective number two.

As recently as "Romance" and "The Concert," plays have shown us the childishness or the vagaries of the artistic temperament. Not even Barrie in "What Every Woman Knows" avoided the age-old situation of the lawful wife who, by a ruse, puts herself in a fascinating light and her rival at a disadvantage, thus recapturing her husband. Everything depends on how truthfully and freshly it is done. In "Enter Madame" it is done with consistent

plausibility, constant freshness, and in a spirit of gay comedy.

Miss Varesi's performance in this play is carried through with much zest and charm, with many vivid touches of character portrayal, and with an unfailing suggestion of underlying true-hearted feeling. No less capitally sustained is the performance of the husband by Mr. Norman Trevor. Every lesser rôle is well acted, also, and the stage-management is smooth, illusive, thoughtful and polished. That the production is, perhaps, the most successful in attracting the public of any made this autumn is certainly a proof of the statement that some of us have made over and over again—that a true character study, vividly and skilfully acted, is one of the best, as it seems nowadays to be one of the rarest, treats in the theatre, and never fails of popularity.

WALTER PRICHARD EATON.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS.

FREE SPEECH AT HOME AND ABROAD.

SIRS: Your note in this week's Current Comment—which, if I may say so, is always a very delightful section of your paper—regarding the Mayor of Mount Vernon's delicate feelings with regard to the reading aloud of the Constitution in the streets of his city, throws my mind back to a recent Sunday afternoon I spent in London. Trafalgar Square was black with people who had gathered to join in a demonstration to demand the recognition of the Soviet Republic. On Nelson's monument hung revolutionary banners and red flags, and the speakers, including several trade-union leaders, uttered sentiments which, in Mount Vernon, would have got them in jail for the rest of their natural lives. Mr. George Lansbury was greeted with shouts of joy and old Mrs. Despard, Lord French's sister, received an equally enthusiastic reception. Presently the speaking was interrupted by an appeal for funds with which to keep the fight going. Instantly the people began to throw coins toward the monument. For five minutes money rained like hail, while the speakers shielded themselves with umbrellas or covered their faces with their hands. And all the time while the shower continued the crowd delighted itself with shouts of "Bolshevik gold," "Chinese bonds," etc.

The reason for this method of contributing money I discovered to lie in the fact that there is a long-standing police regulation against the collection of money at meetings in Trafalgar Square. The present plan of getting around this order was originated by an associate of the late Mr. Keir Hardie, who at one of these gatherings quietly suggested that though the organizers were forbidden to collect money there was no ordinance to stop people from throwing their money about if they wanted to do so. The audience took the hint, and the method persists.

As I look back on my experience that afternoon I wish that the Mayor of Mount Vernon could have been there with me. I think it would have done much to strengthen his nerves. I am, etc.,
Boston, Mass.

L. T. B. LIGHT.

THE CIRCLES IN WHICH WE MOVE.

SIRS: In one of your recent issues you criticize President Nicholas Murray Butler for the statement that "the unrest of to-day is largely due to the use of terms which in many instances are not clearly proved." You state this may be the case "in the circles in which Dr. Murray habitually moves . . . but among miners, railwaymen, and the public at large, it is due to something far more substantial." But is that not the trouble with all intellectuals—the circles in which they move? In another issue of your paper, I find one of our eminent scholars stating in an interesting and useful article: "The losses of the war, perhaps three hundred billion dollars, must be paid by some one." Is that a fact or an assumption? A North Dakota farmer (and you know how crazy they are) would be apt to think that if his buildings burned, his chance of recovery would depend on whether he had insured his buildings, and the solvency of the company if insured. On a gold standard, with the *per capita* debt of "about \$130 for every man, woman and child on the globe" (*vide* a recent bulletin of the National City Bank), with eighteen battle-fronts continually burning up more of the world's accumulated capital, with Polish bonds and other "blue sky" investments, a Non-partisan Leaguer

might question whether the world's capitalistic insurance company were solvent.

Again your scholarly contributor states: "The present prosperity of the farmer is due not to increased crops but to higher prices." But is the farmer prosperous? Perhaps this statement is due to the circles in which the gifted author moves. Certainly the North Dakota farmers do not find much prosperity in the circles in which they move. With a shortage of the wheat-crop which "demand" is "hammering down" in the grain-market as much as ten cents per bushel in a single day, the farmers are wondering what "increased crops" and "higher prices" are going to avail them. In fact the material published in the financial, grain-market, stock-market, and commercial columns of our newspapers gives almost a daily lie to the teachings of economics in the schools.

To put it plainly, the farmers believe that a majority of the so-called intellectuals have long known that the so-called law of "supply and demand" and other so-called economic laws are hoary falsehoods and that, therefore, all intellectuals are *particeps criminis* in this world-wide catastrophe. After "four score years and ten," the last six of which have been passed in the neighbourhood of a great university, I have come to think that the main trouble with most people is to be explained by reference to "the circle in which they habitually move." I am, etc.,
Fullerton, N. D.

J. H. GREENE.

THE VALUE OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATION.

SIRS: Your position on the efficacy of political organizations, as levers of social progress, seems, to my proletarian mind, anarchistic and reactionary, and I am puzzled as to whether or not you gentlemen are wolves in sheep's clothing; at least I am suspicious of you pleasingly satirical writers, as I am of all intellectuals who advocate, directly or otherwise, political suicide.

In your editorial, "Thoughts on a Third Party," which appeared in a recent issue you say, "whatever power the political organization has is purely factitious and exists on sufferance." From this I infer that you share the illusion of the general superiority of the natural over the artificial—a very common error. All social progress is unnatural, factitious and artificial; it is made up of inventions, institutions; and what are they if they are not unnatural, factitious and artificial—improvements upon nature? "They are," as Lester F. Ward well says, "instruments for the utilization of the materials and forces of nature."

It is the lack of understanding on the part of the people—ignorance of their true condition—which is taken advantage of by the ruling-class the world over. Through the instrumentality of political organizations under its control, the ruling-class uses the social forces for its own immediate benefit and to the detriment of the masses. This, of course is trite, but the point I am aiming at is—that this power exists "on sufferance" and can be differently directed on sufferance.

The importance of political organization as a means to political action was well brought out by Lester F. Ward when he said:

I should not in the least yield the a priori principle that legislation is to sociology what invention is to physics, and that, if progress is to become anything more than passive and secular, as we see it in the evolution of worlds, of plants and of animals, the quality of positivity and extra-natural speed must come through what I have called political action. And I should enjoin all who desire to see humanity improved, to labour for that end in precisely the same manner as they labour in all the remaining fields of science, to investigate the laws of social order and social progress, in the hope that light would eventually dawn, and that a clear course would ultimately be revealed, in which such measure of artificial progress might be adopted with safety and carried through with success. These views I should be compelled to hold because there is no alternative but to renounce all effort and trust to the slow laws of cosmical evolution, and also because experience in all the other fields of science shows that this is the normal condition of things, and that, if sociology is really a science, the same attitude should be assumed toward it as has always been assumed toward other sciences, if anything like analogous results are to be expected.

But you may argue that you appreciate the necessity of political action and if I understand your article, that idea was brought out; but at the same time you unmistakably bring out the idea that political action is more effective when it works from a circumference than when it works from a centre; that the centripetal force of the workers' economic organizations can overcome the centrifugal force of political organizations, which represents roughly the resultant of a majority of the social forces. This, to my mind, is an illusion, since it involves economic suicide on the part of our ruling-

class, and that is just as unpopular in these days as it ever has been.

Political organization exists "on sufferance" and so do the economic organizations; and when these two groups clash on fundamental issues, historical conditions will determine the subsequent course of social evolution. If circumstances are not propitious, the economic organizations of the workers, existing on sufferance of the political, will dissolve into an "accelerated movement of parts and a diminished movement of the whole."

But in the last analysis, economic power of the workers lies in its weakness, since it consists of a down-tools policy, a stoppage of the vital functions of the social organism, analogous to a stoppage of heart-action in a physical organism. It is, therefore, immoral, fallacious and suicidal if used beyond a certain point. If labour could be shown to be an external entity—external to society—to be not only not nearly all of society, but not even a part of it; then your thinking would indeed be on par with your writing. But by what kind of mental gymnastics can the fine phraseologists of the *Freeman* show that? I am, etc.,
Seldovia, Alaska.

A. E. HEGNER.

THE force of the foregoing letter depends entirely upon one's conception of the ultimate purpose of political organization and the nature of the State. If our correspondent is interested in knowing our conception of them, he will find it in full in Franz Oppenheimer's brief treatise called "The State." Our correspondent seems to think that the economic organization is in our view, somehow synonymous with labour, which is a considerable and extraordinary error, since it takes no account of capital, the other active factor in the production of wealth.—EDITORS.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF OUR ASIATIC PROBLEM.

SIRS: Will you permit me a word of comment on your discussion of "America's Asiatic Problem" in the *Freeman* for 20 October? It is, I confess, somewhat surprising to find your paper considering the race-problem without any reference to the rule of economic freedom which you seem to have adopted as your guide, and which distinguishes your paper from its rudderless contemporaries. The philosophy which Henry George did so much to popularize and develop is based on the axiom that all men have equal rights in the enjoyment of the free gifts of nature. If we deny this assumption in one instance, we can not hope to win acceptance for it in others. Henry George weakened his case by giving way to local prejudice on the question of Chinese exclusion, and it would be an unfortunate thing if the *Freeman* were to follow his bad example.

No doubt an influx of Asiatic labourers would accentuate the unnatural competition that exists to-day, but this fact can hardly be offered as an excuse for perpetuating injustice—especially by one who is in possession of a solution to the problem, and at a time when the solution has been brought into the realm of practical politics by the proposed amendment to the California constitution known as the Great Adventure.

There is one and only one solution to all human problems, however vexed, and that is equal freedom. The practical steps necessary to remove the dangerous conflicts that lurk in the discriminations against the Negro and the Asiatics are simple and capable of immediate application. The abolition of land-monopoly would transform competition from a curse to a blessing, for the supply of labour could never overtake the demand, and no one could be injured by the productive efforts of others.

May I demur particularly from your conclusion that ignorance about the results of racial inter-breeding offers a good reason for keeping races geographically isolated? Nature is a better arbiter than a state or federal law-makers, who would do well to hesitate before interfering with the law of natural selection.

It is disenchanted, to say the least, to find the *Freeman* ready "to do violence to Oriental feelings," to say nothing of human rights. We have not yet paid all that will be exacted for our compromises on the Negro question, and it would be wise not to add to the account. Let us not forget that these moral debts have a troublesome way of accumulating at compound interest and must be paid in full when the time comes for the final reckoning. I am, etc.,
Southwest Harbour, Maine.

FRANK W. GARRISON.

MR. GARRISON'S criticism is welcome. The article in question was intended, less as a statement of editorial opinion, than as a review of the controversial aspects of the problem as they are rehearsed by partisans. A consideration of the fundamental question is being held for later publication.—EDITORS.

BOOKS.

AN OVERDOSE OF TRUTH.

AN overdose of certain poisons is said to be immediately rejected by the human system, thus constituting its own antidote. Mr. Upton Sinclair's attack on the American press in "The Brass Check"¹ makes me wonder if an overdose of truth may have the same effect. As a whole, and in its several parts, the book strikes me as being essentially true. It is not a question of emotional acceptance merely. My own observations support its main contentions. And yet . . .

It is all so very subjective, for one thing, although packed with objectively controllable facts. One-half of it—and the first half at that—is given to an impassioned statement of Mr. Sinclair's own case against our periodical and daily press. The statement is true in the main, I know. And yet . . .

One reads the book with the sense of a personal grievance that is prejudicial to the total impression of the work, no matter how well grounded that grievance may be. Agony is piled on agony until one flees as once I fled from Alphonse Daudet's "Jack," feeling it almost a case of indecency on the part of the author to let fate turn against his hero with such unerring persistency. There is no fiction in Mr. Sinclair's book. The experiences of his hero have not been imagined to prove a thesis. The hero is himself, and he has merely told what happened to him—as he saw it, of course. And yet . . .

It takes the contrast of light to make blackness come into its own in a picture. I have a reproduction of a painting by Rembrandt showing an old monk reading by the window of his cell. The whole place seems steeped in impenetrable darkness because of the few bright rays that stream through the open window upon the book and the reader's face. Cover up that single source of light, and you find that every object in the cell becomes visible. But you find also that the striking quality of the darkness is gone. It is as if it had lost something, and as if this loss turned it into dull, drab gloom.

Black on black is the painting given us by Mr. Sinclair. Not a ray of light to make the blackness convincing. Our minds tend instinctively to reject it. Intellectually we may accept every detail. Emotionally we rebel—wondering uneasily whether the fault be with the book or with ourselves.

Thus the see-saw rises and falls perpetually, dropping us from the height of belief to the depth of disbelief, and then raising us again for another drop. A troubling book. Doubly so because our uneasiness concerns both the book and the conditions revealed by it—conditions from which one no longer can get away; and also because one resents being forced into a seeming defence of what one would prefer to attack.

Mr. Sinclair's main contentions are that the American press and the great news-bureaux serving it submit to capitalistic control, and that, for this reason, our supply of news is "poisoned at the source." The second half of the book brings an impressive array of painstakingly collected and vividly told instances supporting those contentions. If any one of these instances were disproved or explained away, and the process repeated until a full half of the damaging evidence had been disposed of, if the rest remained unrefuted, the case presented by Mr. Sinclair would be as good as intact. Any one who has

studied the American press at close quarters and with open eyes knows that much more than one-half of Mr. Sinclair's evidence is likely to survive the most grueling examination. And yet . . .

I shall not indulge in any commonplaces about man's proverbial inability to recognize and record the simplest truth or the commonest fact without piling up an appalling total of errors. We know now that, for pragmatic purposes, a modicum of truth will serve, and I take for granted that it is the absence of this modicum which Mr. Sinclair proclaims and protests against. Without fear of being guilty of evasiveness or undue optimism, I might answer that this modicum is present in an astonishingly large percentage of cases, even in the most brazenly capitalistic specimens of our press, but again I forbear, because I realize that this fact does not lessen the significance of its absence in a small number of cases, typical of what Mr. Sinclair has in mind. Even if the greater part of the press should tell the truth in ninety-nine cases, but fail *purposely* in the one remaining out of a hundred, Mr. Sinclair's case would be proved.

That case, as I see it, rests on an alleged purpose behind the suppression or falsification of certain news items. Its main and most far-reaching charge is one of conspiracy. Its pivotal point is one of intention rather than of action. This is where the sad weakness of Mr. Sinclair's book comes in. It is so characteristically political. It wants us to believe that our fellow-men are wicked, when we know that they are merely human—like ourselves.

Of course, the press of our country is not pure or disinterested. Admittedly it is not a satisfactory instrument for the recording of numerous details that are of the utmost importance for the judgments daily demanded of us for the proper management of our private and collective existences. Particularly in moments of crisis, its news pages no less than its editorial columns are apt to contain private opinions and propaganda rather than unbiased statements of facts. Whether its motto be "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" or "all the news that's fit to print," these complacent boasts remain merely pious professions, and the actual performance stands open to challenge by every one viewing truth and fitness from a different angle. But there is no conspiracy about it at all. The men who run the press simply do it as you and I run our own lives and our own businesses: to suit motives more or less unconsciously connected with our personal interests and natural desires.

The question of guilt always introduces a bewildering personal element. We declare Jack a devil, and all of Jack's friends and acquaintances promptly feel constrained to declare him an angel, while, as a matter of fact, Jack is merely saying and doing what, from childhood up, he has come to think of as unquestionably proper. The main secret about the American press to-day, which Mr. Sinclair does not seem to have grasped at all, is that it serves faithfully to express the thoughts and feelings and foibles and prejudices of an overwhelming majority of our people.

What Mr. Sinclair and I and many others might question, is why the minority should be gagged and muzzled and misrepresented in the way it is. But if we do ask that question, some one will surely answer that there is a Jesuit in all of us, and that minorities no less than majorities believe in the justification of means by their ends. The difference is only that the means of the majority are more effective, and are

¹"The Brass Check." Upton Sinclair. Pasadena, Cal. By the author.

moreover sanctioned by the alleged spirit of democracy. There are elements of disinterestedness and altruism in such an attitude, too. How many of us can stand by tolerantly and see a man do what we think will harm both himself and others? No, the fact of the matter is, that when our press suppresses, it does so, on the whole, in the honest belief that it is doing a fine thing for all of us. The sooner we face this awkward fact the better, for it gives us the full measure of the difficulty confronting us.

There is a Puck that throws a charm on every human eye, so that it sees not reality but what it wishes to see. A New York Socialist daily paper, they tell me, announced recently in thunderous tones that Warsaw had fallen four long days earlier, and that the capitalistic press knew it, but would not permit the news to become publicly known. At that time the Russian armies were fleeing in disorder. Must we then add the whole Socialist press to the litany read to us by Mr. Sinclair? After all, men's motives are pretty much the same. It is only the circumstances determining their orientation that differ.

Progress is the result of conflict between opposing tendencies. So is truth. It is a slow way of producing it, but for the present at any rate we know no better. If Mr. Sinclair gets his "National News"—as I sincerely hope he does—will he guarantee to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth? No doubt he will, but it must needs be a reckless hazard, because it will be a human product like everything else. And so I fear it will no more be a "record of events pure and simple" than are Mr. Hearst's or Mr. Munsey's private collection of newspapers, but just another "journal of opinion."

Reform we need, and to get it things must be hammered. I have no doubt that "The Brass Check" is helping in the hammering process. But such a book can only make us divinely dissatisfied at the best. The road to something better can not be built out of mere condemnation of existing badness, or out of splendid theories, however logically constructed. Inch by inch, the road must be laid along the dreary desert of daily endeavour. The stones are our own selves. And they must be laid humbly.

When in the old days Mr. Sinclair and I formed the government and the opposition, respectively, at Helicon Hall, he used to say that I could forgive anything but bad taste. But bad taste signifies to me nothing but an ineffective adjustment of the available material to the purpose aimed at. It implies a waste of energy and, in cases like the present, a probable miscarriage of cherished hopes. Mr. Sinclair's book is a brave and sincere effort carried out in the worst of all tastes—so that your attention becomes focused on the writer instead of his writing. And this is far too common a fault among those who otherwise strive nobly and valiantly for the making of a better world.

EDWIN BJÖRCKMAN.

A TALE OF THE FOLK.

IN Martin Anderson Nexö's "Ditte: Girl Alive"¹ there is scarcely any of that close drawing of fact which is known as realism. Persons and places are washed in with the simplest outlines; the story is as unstudied as a folk-tale. Yet it covers a fair range of characters and is apparently the first volume in a series which will match in scope Nexö's earlier "Pelle, the Conqueror." In the squalor and ugliness of the life portrayed there is room enough for the kind of detailed elaboration which seems to be our favourite English method. Ditte is an illegiti-

mate child who is cared for by her grandparents, old Soren and Maren, the poorest of poor folk; they live on a tiny strip of land to which the sea by its erosion of their little farm has forced them and their forbears to retreat. After the death of Soren, Maren sustains herself and the child by begging and by selling the cures and simples which she knows, and through her knowledge of which, she gains from her neighbours a grudging respect; but she is suspected of black arts and suffers a lonely ostracism in her miserable hut. The life of Lars Peter, the rag and bone man whom Ditte's mother finally marries, is hardly less bitter. Ditte's lot is thrown in with that of Lars Peter, for she is taken to live with her mother as soon as she is old enough to be useful, and she remains as the childish foster-mother of the younger children.

But with all the straitened cruelty of its events the story has a quality which is almost glamorous. The simple telling and lack of stress somehow give it breadth; it is full of the effect of open spaces. There are passages of great tenderness, and others of fresh gaiety and resilience. Then, too, a primary perception of human forces lifts the story out of any narrow bondage. In old Maren there is the heroic tragedy of instinctive affection and duty. Lars Peter's humour is worn away but his flaring honesty and his devotion to his children and to Ditte remain. Ditte's wayward, childish energy changes to a resolute strength. Her life is only begun in this first book. Maren's is finished. Lars Peter's will continue. The groundwork is here for a long tale and a moving one.

CONSTANCE MAYFIELD ROURKE.

AN OLYMPIAN TEAM.

IN the chapel of a certain New York church, where on Sunday afternoons art becomes handmaiden to religion and poets rise to recite, the rector on one occasion recently opened the proceedings by indicating a sedate row of chairs with the remark: "The poets will sit here." The sentence itself was commonplace enough, but there was an unconscious generic inflection in his pronunciation of "poets" which seemed to imply that they were a race apart. It was almost as though he had said "Etruscans" or "moundbuilders." To a certain degree, although in a different sense, the publishers of "A Miscellany of American Poetry—1920"¹ have pointed to its pages and said: "The poets will sit here"—biennially. At this year's performance eleven poets share the miscellany, and each has been admitted on his own responsibility, so to speak, charged with the election of the work which he wishes to represent him, and allowed to arrange it in accordance with his own preferences. Further than the physical requirement to stay within the same covers, no restrictions have been urged. It is published "without a preface, a programme or an editor"—an eminently sane and revealing experiment, and one which justifies itself in the results.

All but a handful of the poems appear here in print for the first time; they afford an admirable introduction to eleven diverse and significant talents. One of these, Edwin Arlington Robinson, has but an eight-line representation, a contribution so tiny that it slips through the critical net. Of the others, the outstanding voices are those of Carl Sandburg and John Gould Fletcher, the former for sheer strength and poetic daring, the latter for sheer beauty and poetic mood. Sandburg runs the gamut from gossamer fancy in "Silver Wind," through the amazing fun of "Aprons of Silence" to the stark intensity of "Ossawatomie," and comes through with never a false note. Fletcher sustains a minor key—a bell-like tone, rich and subdued. Robert Frost is represented by half a dozen short poems—all harsh and angular, with sharp edges that cut the tongue. Miss Amy Lowell continues to break her ego into brittle fragments, which reflect the bright colours of her imagination. James Oppenheim, through unwise selection possibly, reveals here an artificiality and an occasional rawness which are distinctly not

¹ "Ditte: Girl Alive." Martin Anderson Nexö. New York: Henry Holt & Co.

¹ "A Miscellany of American Poetry—1920." New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe.

poetic. The difference between his lynching poem, "Johnson, Negro," and Mr. Sandburg's "Man, the Man-Hunter" is all the difference between the laboured expression of an artificial emotion and the genuine expression of a real one. Louis Untermeyer, Conrad Aiken, Vachel Lindsay, Sara Teasdale, and Jean Starr Untermeyer complete an exhibit which amply justifies this new experiment in anthology-making.

LISLE BELL.

FROM THE SPANISH.

THERE can be no quarrelling with the spirit of Dr. Walsh's "Hispanic Anthology"; it is a collection of translations, "by northern Hispanophiles, of Spanish poems into English verse," offered as an affectionate tribute to the Spanish poet of to-day, whether he writes in the old world or the new. Dr. Walsh, besides contributing a large portion of the versions, has garnered almost eight hundred pages of translations into something like a chronological unity, providing the selections with short prefatory notes and interspersing them with some twenty-nine portraits of ancient and modern Spanish poets. Clearly, then, a labour of love.

It was inevitable, however, that the final result should be in more than one way deficient. In the first place, the compiler found open to his choice only such poems as had already been rendered into English—a distinct handicap to the formation of any anthology from a foreign language. In the second, as regards the contemporary Spanish-American field, information is scanty, difficult of access, and coloured by partisanship. And, worst of all, he who compiles an anthology of any sort courts all the recriminations in the catalogue of *de gustibus*. While the present volume contains many of the most famous poems in Spanish literature, while more than one of the translations is in itself a work of art, it would be an injustice to Castilian poetry to assert that it is either complete or representative. At best it provides a starting-point for the great Hispanic anthology which will gradually evolve from oft-repeated attempts each of which will bring its permanent contribution.

What contemporary reader, for example, dwelling in a world aquiver with the pangs of a new birth, would imagine from these pages that Spanish poets, too, were part of the revolt and that they, too, beheld a new vision? To be sure, it is interesting and needful to know that a Gómez Manrique, in the fifteenth century, should write some *coplas* on the bad government of Toledo; but is it not equally important to know that there is in Argentina an Alberto Ghiraldo, in Bolivia a Ricardo Jaimes Freyre—to note only two poets out of many—who have revolted against the evils of modern government? Is it not worth while recalling, in the case of Rubén Darío, that he published his great "Canto a la Argentina" in 1910, thus showing that he was something more than a mere singer of an idle day, devoid of the social sense? Yet the names of Ghiraldo and Jaimes Freyre do not occur in Dr. Walsh's collection, while not even the title of Dario's lofty paean to internationalism is mentioned.

There are other omissions in this anthology quite as striking, though the fault is not the editor's but rather that of the translators, who have not provided him with the material in the first place. The representation of Portuguese poets—who are of course included in the adjective Hispanic—is meagreness itself. Of the old writers there is the inevitable Camoens; of the moderns, the Brazilian artist, Olavo Bilac. But where are Machado de Assis, Guerra Junqueiro, and to return to the moderns, Salvador Rueda? And, in view of the few women represented, where is the charming lyricist, María Enriqueta of Mexico, not unlike our own Sara Teasdale?

As to errors of inclusion, they are present, but not in disconcerting number. A later edition should correct some of the erroneous dates that have crept into the notes; Blanco-Fombona was born in 1874, not in 1868;

Pezoa Veliz, the Chilean poet, died in 1908, not in 1903; to write of Amado Nervo that "his later poems took on a patriotic tone not so artistically effective" is to mislead the reader, for Nervo's final collection is far from chauvinistic and such poems of his as "Pájaro Milagroso" indicate that he foresaw a world in which national boundaries would disappear.

Many readers who are familiar with translations from the Spanish by Longfellow, Byron, Bryant and Southey, will be surprised to encounter here versions signed, for example, by John Masefield and James Elroy Flecker; and among other contemporary translators, Miss Blackwell and Messrs. Goldsmith, Hills, Coester and Rice are well represented.

The volume, despite its shortcomings, should be owned by every Hispanophile; it represents a pioneer-effort in a field agape with pitfalls, and, however much one may criticize the result as it now stands, Dr. Walsh, by the mere fact of having initiated it and brought it forth, has earned the thanks of his fellow enthusiasts.

ISAAC GOLDBERG.

SHORTER NOTICES.

IT requires a handful of diverse opinions to round out a composite answer to the question: "What's the Matter With Ireland?"¹ Miss Russell has undertaken her theme objectively, in the best reportorial sense, and by sounding a number of disparate apostles—as widely dissimilar as De Valera, George Russell, Countess Markiewicz and the Bishop of Killaloe—she manages to throw light upon all phases of the problem. She wisely refrains from any ex cathedra dogmatism on her own account, and merely adds her testimony as an eye-witness to some of the most significant scenes of Irish unrest. The book opens with a chapter of statistics, which bring the present plight of the country into the foreground of the reader's imagination, and with this accomplished, the author turns to the narration of incidents, and to the gleaning of opinions, which are set down with impartial emphasis.

L. B.

THOSE who have neatly ticketed Mr. Edgar Lee Masters as a cynic will be obliged after reading "Mitch Miller"² to change their label—if they must have labels. There is, to be sure, a sub-acid quality in the epilogue; Mr. Masters sees in the present drift of American life a destruction of those elements of idealism which somehow belong to the period which he describes, that of thirty years ago; and he writes with disillusion of what life—life anywhere—would have brought in loss of hope and faith to the boy who is the hero of his story. But the mood of the book is one of dedication rather than of challenge. Its tone is sunny and fresh and sweet; its beauty quiet and unobtrusive. Instead of the bitterness of Spoon River there is here the easy flow of a boy's thought and feeling. The background is full of a rich local life, with spare, half-finished, but direct pictures of people and ways of living; indeed, much of the book's charm comes from the amplitude of general life which it suggests. As a picture of youth it is lively and amusing; it keeps an unbroken interest in the activities of the two boys. But where "Tom Sawyer" is often melodrama or farce, this story of Mr. Masters is nearly always poetry. There constantly crowd forward in these pages—and yet without a definite word—the motives which animate young adventure: the unfettered expectation, the creative purpose, the idealization of material achievement. Later in a troublous youthful period when expectation is shattered, the story reaches its most sensitive passages. "Mitch Miller" comes close to being a masterpiece with its breadth of interpretation, and the fineness and singleness of its mood. It is complete, even to the tragedy at the end.

C. M. R.

A REVIEWER'S NOTE-BOOK.

IT has often been observed that European peasants, settling in this country, lose many of their finest characteristics without gaining anything to take their place. The same phenomenon is also familiar as regards European artists and writers who either come here to live or stay long enough to be influenced by American life. They degenerate, they are demoralized—what is the accurate word? One might easily name many instances of this. However conscientious they have been at home, however

¹ "Hispanic Anthology." Poems translated from the Spanish by English and North American Poets. Collected and Arranged by Thomas Walsh. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

² "What's the Matter With Ireland?" Ruth Russell. New York: The Devin-Adair Co.

² "Mitch Miller." Edgar Lee Masters. New York: The Macmillan Co.

impervious to seduction, almost as they touch our shores they undergo a transformation, they become something less than themselves, they lose their convictions, they lose their individualities. One almost thinks of Circe's island where men were turned into swine.

Not for money, I think, do men surrender their gifts: that is the simplest and the crudest of misconceptions. An infinitely complex web of circumstances surrounds the betrayal of every talent. One must consider what these artists and writers are who come to us and suffer such a tragic alteration, and what it is they have to face. They are human like other people; that is to say, they are creatures of habit. Stendhal said that in the nineteenth century an artist had to be either a monster or a sheep. The same thing is true to-day. In order to become really eminent, an artist must cultivate his conscience to a degree that is quite incompatible with social life as the contemporary world knows it. Gauguin called himself a wolf, Nietzsche was haunted by his fantasy of the blond beast, and how many modern philosophers have conceived of themselves after the fashion of that old Hindu image of the "solitary rhinoceros"? There we have Stendhal's "monster," and indeed conscience is a fearful thing: heaven knows into what caverns it may lead us if we give it the reins. But this bitter sincerity no one expects of the rank and file of artists and writers; and of this rank and file, on the whole, are those who come to America and whose fate I have in mind. They are not monsters, they are sheep, they are creatures of habit. If they are demoralized by the unfamiliar conditions of our life, this is the first fact that has to be remembered.

PICTURE them at home, living along in the established groove of their craft. They have their appointed places, they know their tasks, they belong to their school. The sceptical faces of their comrades remind them how limited their capacities are. The critical reviews lash them without mercy when they go astray. They live in their suburbs a sober, humble, ordered existence. In short, they have guideways of every kind; they feel their way forward, step by step, knowing themselves and what they can do and knowing that they are known. They are almost as firmly fixed in their little world and in the integrity of their tradition as the village carpenter. And when they travel, in France, in Germany, in Italy, they find almost the same conditions as those at home. The confraternity welcomes them; they discover the familiar groups; nothing is expected of them but what they can do and they are expected to do precisely what they can. They find society stratified along the familiar lines and willing guides, who speak the language of their own spirits, initiate them into whatever aspects of this foreign life they can not readily grasp. In short, creatures of habit as they are, so long as they remain in Europe they are able to pursue the development of their individualities in a security that is quite unknown on this side of the world. They are craftsmen and nothing but craftsmen; and one might almost say, relatively speaking, that nothing tempts them to become anything else.

THEN, for whatever reason, they come to America. I shall not speak of the interviewers who meet them at Sandy Hook, the women's clubs that seize upon them, the editors who pursue them. These agencies, I think, could never have their demoralizing effects were it not for something else. That something else is the state of their own profession here, and what their own profession he has done and left undone. They find no one to receive them who understands them, no one to initiate them on their own plane into this strange new society, no one to give them the criticism upon which they depend to keep their own compasses true; they find that the native writers have done no fundamental thinking about American life and are unable to stand between them and the public. They find themselves received, in short, not as writers but as celebrities, of whom everything is expected which they are least capable of giving. Their own kind, standardless,

ignorant, irresponsible, childish, surrender them over, if one may express it so, at the very moment when they have lost sight of all the familiar constellations by which they have navigated their careers, to the opportunities of the public.

THE opportunities of the public! It is like a furnace of intensely personal emotions into which they fall; it would melt a heart of iron. They are asked to decide whether American women are prettier than English women, whether one ought to divorce one's husband or not, how American men can be induced to think about something beside their business, how one ought to bring up one's children, how the Mexican question should be settled, what is the correct view to take in regard to labour, what is the right way for the people of this country to live, love, think, behave, write, paint, eat, sleep, build, teach, learn, work, dress, breathe. A chorus of appealing, tearful, bewildered, charming, all-too-charming voices goes up to them like an intoxicating incense. This poor little humble novelist, who has patiently practised his craft and lived on cheese and beer in some dismal European suburb —what is he to do? The proportions of his life are instantly deranged. Far from having willed it, he finds himself a prophet, a missionary, a father confessor by *force majeure*. Dollars? He can not drive them away. His art, small enough at best, becomes in his mind smaller and dimmer than ever. To write so that the millions can hear his message has become almost an obligation upon him as a human being. His heart, in a word, becomes suddenly inflamed; he finds himself following its propulsions as if they were divine commands.

Yes, the heart, the slippery human heart, is at the bottom of all this mischief. They go to pieces, these respectable European writers and artists who see too much of America, because, while they are off guard themselves, America beseeches them for everything its own writers and artists ought to have given it and leaves them no energy to recollect themselves. One might feel less disturbed if anything but evil resulted from this phenomenon. But, in reality, an artist is able to give the world nothing but the fruits of his own integrity, and the importunate, personal frame of mind in which the American public approaches the visiting celebrity neutralizes whatever good counsel it might get from him. Moreover, the spectacle of an artist in decay, an artist actuated no longer by the demands of his craft but solely by personal emotions, adds each time, in the end, to the discredit in which the creative life is held. It is a shameful situation; surely the writers and artists of this country ought to know who is responsible for it.

It is they who should be answering the questions of the public all the time instead of leaving the public in such ignorance of itself and of this country that it has to ask advice of every traveller. It is they who should build up, by making themselves worthy of respect, a respect for the integrity of other individualities. Inevitably, as things are, the European writer who shares our life, creature of habit as he is, degenerates to the level of our own artistic degeneration. Until we have charted this country intellectually, until we have absorbed the shock of the public, as it were, by satisfying, with our own work, its desire for something positive and commanding, until we have established a habit of realistic criticism, it will always be so. Meanwhile, one can understand the remark of Bernard Shaw, who knows, perhaps, that he is not quite sufficiently a monster himself to be safe, that not for a million dollars would he visit America.

THE Reviewer recommends the following recent books to the notice of readers of the *Freeman*:

"Essentials in Art," by Osvald Sirén. New York: John Lane Co.

"Main Street," by Sinclair Lewis. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe.

"Moon-Calf," by Floyd Dell. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Thanksgiving

AT about this time, as the Farmers' Almanac would say, look out for Thanksgiving Day proclamations from the President and Governors. These manifestos usually direct our attention to the blessings of peace, the abundant crops and the hum of the busy wheels of industry.

The American custom of setting apart a day for joyful or prayerful celebration of Nature's bounties appeals to us, but sometimes we think that the statesmen who guide our affairs are unconscious of the ironic implications conveyed by their solemn bulls.

We might, for example, expatiate on a peace whose ugliness is second only to that of war; or on the thoughts of the farmer who pays the penalty of abundance by seeing his crops rot because they are barred from the market by a middleman who wants to keep prices up; or on the reflections of the labourer—whether he be working, striking or out of a job—when he contemplates the system under which the wheels of industry revolve.

But there is always something to be thankful for and, as the FREEMAN aims to be critical without being querulous, we commend the spirit that is symbolized by turkey (too often cold-storage) and cranberry sauce. We aver, though, that it is the part of good citizens to stop, look and listen while they give thanks. Too often we are lulled by sonorous periods into forgetting inequitable systems of taxation, injustices to subject peoples, maladministration of the law and suppression of civil rights.

The FREEMAN in this season of Thanksgiving, reminds you of all that its name stands for, though, to judge from the appreciative letters that come to us, such reminder is unnecessary. If you are thankful for the FREEMAN why not tell your neighbour of it? Why not tell your librarian to subscribe? Why not have it at your club? Why not give a year's subscription as a gift? If, for reasons of your own, it is unpractical to do any of these things, send us the names of friends who might appreciate the FREEMAN and we will send sample copies to them.

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